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Navigating the Digital Landscape: Legal Challenges in Enforcing Copyright Protection in the Era of Digital Infringement

Navya Airachia[1], Dr. Vidyottama Sharma[2]

[1]Research Scholar, Amity Law School, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, India
[2]Assistant Professor, Amity Law School, Amity University Madhya Pradesh, India

Abstract

This paper will attempt to demonstrate that how the rise of emerging technologies has caused a shift in Intellectual Property Rights especially; digital copyright. This aims to investigate in detail the effects of technology in relation to the law in particular a branch of law known as copyright law with emphasis on digital copyright infringement and the inadequacies of enforcement. The goal of the paper is also to give a clear understanding of how the development of the technologies over the years has defined or redefined the IPR frameworks with reference to digital copyright, and the related legalities and enforcement. Among the objectives are deficit of knowledge in the current legislation on IPR, defining the role of IT platforms for either facilitating or preventing piracy of copyright content, and determining the efficacy of legal measures as a response to new threats emerging from the use of different technologies. By adopting doctrinal method of research as well as comparative legal analysis, the paper examines legal instruments, case laws as well as the international instruments in relation to digital copyright infringement. The study concludes with the necessity of possessing new and more flexible legal solutions for analyzing and combating digital copyright infringement. As a result, the technology offers improved means for monitoring and protecting copyrights while at the same time, posing fresh legal and legalistic problems. Based on the findings of the paper, recommendations are made towards closing the gap between law and technology in the formulation of measures for the enhancement of IPR in the digital era.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, Blockchain, Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works, Copyright holders, Copyright Infringement, Digital Copyright, Digital innovation, Digital Millennium Copyright Act, Digital piracy, Digital Platforms, Digital Watermarking, Enforcement Mechanisms, Enforcement strategies, EU Copyright Directive, Exclusive rights, Fair use, Intellectual Property Rights, Smart contracts, social media platforms, WIPO Copyright Treaty, etc.

INTRODUCTION

In today's era and especially the field of law and technology have been interconnected historically as because over and over with the advancement of time we have seen laws shifting according to the technological development and on the other hand, technology has been responding to legal frameworks that have been implemented. This can be imported through understanding about Copyright regulation as an area of the broader Intellectual Property Rights (IPR). Intellectual property rights are basically rights

that are related to our creativity and innovation. Copyright law is acquiring the exclusive rights inherent to the author or creator of literary or artistic creations.

The general formation of IPR or Intellectual property rights and in particular copyright law has seen many transformations under the pressure of technological advancement. Previous copyright laws paid much attention to the tangible works, while the use of technologies in the present world has made it necessary to come up with measures to protect content in intellectual works. As the Internet becomes the main medium for content sharing, users are more and more struggling with attempts to regulate the use of their productions[1]. A new service of copying right is now providing protection to digital products that include e-books, music, films, software, and user created products. That coupled with new forms of media distribution such as streaming programs and digital storefronts, new shortcomings in copyright legislation arise every so often.

Such drivers are increasingly noticeable having been compounded by such technologies such as AI, blockchain and digital platforms. The ability to convert creativity to assets has been democratized by AI as machines compose art, music, books, and even stories, thus emerging tough litigations concerning ownership and lawful rules on copyright[2]. With its decentralized and secure database, blockchain may well provide answers to the issues of digital rights management, authenticity, and automation of rights within smart contracts. It is self-explanatory, though, because with decentralization, enforcement is much more challenging since it has to be implemented across numerous interconnected networks. Also, the application of ICT with social accounts like YouTube, Tik-Tok, and peddling copyrighted content is very easy through the platforms[3].

The digital era is a challenge to copyrights especially when dealing with the digital economy. Infringement is no longer simple and piracy has spread across different channels and geographical regions. The more conventional methods of enforcement like send-takedown notices, fail to adequately address the pace and size of the infringement. They also stem from the fact that most of the time they act where the infringed content was sourced from jurisdictions with different copyright standards that make cross-jurisdiction cooperation's difficult[4]. In addition, global internet crime or the appearance of commercials; the dark web and anonymous networks make activity and fight for violations of copyright protection more challenging. These challenges clearly show the need for new effective ideas of enforcement strategies which correspond with the present digital environment.

The following paper seeks to fill these gaps with regards to the current IPR legislations to take a look into how the IT platforms can foster and hinder piracy. It will also assess the efficiency of legal measures functioning in relation to the new challenges created by the emergent technologies. Furthermore, the research will determine the rationale for continuous changes in the current legal framework in an endeavour of promoting flexibility in the enforcement mechanisms for copyrights[5]. This paper endeavours to add to current discussions on this particular issue by examining how technology both facilitates creators to create new content and hinders attempts to crack down on piracy. Lastly, this paper shall give detailed suggestions on how to strengthen the copyright enforcement regimes in responding to the challenges that come with the new-age deployment of technology in the economy.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This paper seeks to establish how the legal frameworks for international copyright have impacted on the growth of intellectual property legal system. The first step towards international protection was taken

through the Berne Convention for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works signed in 1886 Setting up the basic policy framework of the Berne Convention automatically granted authors' protection whenever and wherever their works were produced, thus not requiring that authors formally register their works to gain protection In establishing the system of national treatment or the principle that authors of a work obtain the same legal status abroad as they do at home. It also came up with moral rights, whereby creators could prevent alteration of such work that would bring prejudice to the creator (WIPO, 2023)[6]. In 1996 the WIPO copyright treaty revised the protection granted to copyrights for software, databases and other media forms hence transitioning from the old order into a new improved one in line with these technologies (WIPO, 2023) [7].

At the national level, paradigms involving the regulation like the Digital Millennium Copyright Act [DMCA] in the United States provided safe harbour rules in the provision that online service providers without; delay erase and or remove infringing items once informed of their unauthorized use. Likewise, the EU Copyright Directive (2019) intended to address the problems with platforms sharing the users' content, making certain obligations on platforms to prevent use of infringing content (EU Commission, 2019)[8]. There are two of such frameworks that I wish to explain, both of which emphasize on the constant development of the copyright regime to fit emerging technological trends.

It is important to note that growing advancements in technology and the phenomena of digital platforms have upset the conventional regrets of copyright. While services like YouTube and Spotify changed how people consume content by creating the 'streaming library', they also enabled easier sharing of such things as bootlegged mixes and, naturally, pirated content. Social media applications like TikTok even mix between content created by the user and the copyrighted content (Hugenholtz, 2018)[9]. In these circumstances enforcement has been primarily reactive with assistance from tools such as YouTube's Content ID which detects unauthorized copyrighted material and has the ability to give revenue rights to the original creators.

Another factor we have today is non-fungible tokens, which creates another layer of ownership and licensing issues. NFTs are a way of owning a token that has its value on a blockchain, but they can also be a way to sell copyrighted material without permissions since they are anchored on a chain (Ossala, 2022)[10]. Such technologies reveal the failures of legal structures when trying to cover decentralized digital economies.

Original information technologies are thus acting both as the enabler and solution to copyright violation. Blockchain technology is likely to provide possible solutions for the copyright control due to features of the blocks and the smart contracts. These can help to manage IPR regimes and enable enhanced automated collection of royalties thereby managing usage rights concerning digital assets across the internet for creators (Wang et al., 2019)[11]. Nevertheless, the enforcement issues are also arising from the use of blockchain due to the fact that it is hard to govern since it is a decentralized technology.

Another important method in the field of copyright protection is also Artificial Intelligence (AI). There are also modern algorithms specific to machine learning, where such internet platforms employ to monitor and remove copyright infringing content almost immediately. Insert However, since works created using AI have raised questions concerning authorship – Can the AI be credited as the author of the work or the ownership of the work belongs to the person who incorporated the use of AI? It is unclear what kind of impact or even when the effect, these questions make it difficult for lawmakers around the globe (Gervais, 2020)[12].

Last but not the least digital watermarking has an extra layer of security since it involves imprinting

ownership details on the content being protected. This technology preserves the ability to track such works, as well as prevent piracy and facilitates the use of technological safeguards alongside the legal systems (Smith, 2018)[13]. It also makes it easier for the platforms to detect areas of high risk of infringement ahead of time thus enhancing their defence against newly emerging threat.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This work uses the doctrinal approach to examine how current copyright law interfaces with these new technologies including blockchain and AI. Doctrine research aid in developing theoretical and practical difficulties encountered when enforcing copyrights especially on issues to do with piracy. The study also uses a comparative legal research approach to its investigation of how different jurisdictions deal with these challenges. Distinctions between national legislations for example DMCA in the United States and EU Copyright Directive works as a clue to analyze strengths and weakness of the existing legislation.

The sources of data include, analyzing case laws such as Google v. Some national laws (for example, the US and UK), as well as global legislation, such as the Berne Convention and the WIPO Copyright Treaty that define today's copyright. Furthermore, the literature search is also included in the study, concerning the analysis of the secondary sources of information regarding blockchain, artificial intelligence, and enforcement mechanisms, as well as innovations such as watermarking. By combining the qualitative and quantitative approaches, different aspects of the legal and technological frameworks can be grasped, and realistic suggestions for the strengthening of IPR protection can be provided.

TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND ITS IMPACT ON IPR FRAMEWORKS

New technologies have greatly changed the parameters of copyright playing both the card of strengths and weaknesses in legal protections of intellectual property rights. These survey findings reveal the social utility of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is slowly but gradually expanding to influence the field of content creation and enforcement. It is still uncertain whether accounts of utilizing artificial intelligence to compose a song, write a novel or create a painting own the copyright for the work they have created. Copyright laws currently assign ownership to human authors, but through AI-law relations create controversies concerning who owns a copyright in the AI system's created work—the creator of the system, the system itself, or both[14]. Another crucial application of AI is enforcement where machine learning executes the search for copyright materials in the platforms. These algorithms assist to remove pirating content in real-time and assist firms cut down piracy and conform to copyright policies.

New opportunities for the management of copyrights arise with the help of the application of a blockchain. Thus, blockchain allows building distributed ledgers that contain information on ownership and transactions in digital assets. This is especially important for copyright as it can attests to the authenticity of content to prevent others from using it. Also, the contracts that run on the blockchain, allowing for automation of licensing the royalties, minimize the use of middlemen and make sure artists are paid their dues[15]. These innovations demystify the enforcement of copyrights besides encouraging merits of accountability among platforms.

A second technique of protecting the right of an individual or company is through Digital Watermarking. Through harnessing of apparently hidden data in the digital media files, watermarking ensures that the identity of the owner or creator will not be lost even when the material is passed from one user to the other[16]. This makes it easier to weigh down the creators of the content and also helps to track down anyone who uses it unlawfully. YouTube's Content ID, for example, goes a step further by using

independent scanning to compare the uploaded content against copyrighted data. In case of an identification of the match, the platform can call for its blocking, splitting the revenues with the owner of the rights or there can be a warning for the uploaded. It is harmonious approach to maintaining enforcement while taking into consideration the nature of user generated content in the digital platforms[17].

As these technologies provide profound and unorthodox approaches to legal challenges, they present new legal issues also. This makes jurisdiction and enforcement a challenge for blockchain because its design does not have one controlling authority for the transactions made on the system. Like all machine-generated material, AI works challenge the existing legal definitions of authorship and ownership which again calls for legislation in terms of ownership. In the case of watermarking and automated detection, privacy, the right of fair use and false positives add to the challenge of enforcement. The developments in those technologies underscore the compatibility between IPR and the need to transform copyright legal frameworks in order to address the challenges created by digital innovation[18].

CHALLENGES IN DIGITAL COPYRIGHT LAW ENFORCEMENT

Self-regulation adapted to the Web environment is subjected to a number of issues which are challenging related to digital copyright enforcement, primarily the aspects of jurisdiction, responsibility of platforms and the lack of congruence in current legal systems. Such issues as jurisdictional and cross-border are among some of the greatest challenges[19]. The internet is by default international in nature while copyright laws differ across countries; this makes enforcement a tricky affair. It is significant that an infringement that took place in one country is not necessarily unlawful in another, which puts Portal and creators and copyright holders generally in a quandary as to where to seek remedies[20]. Also, enforcement processes are time delayed by various factors that include vary legal requirements, multiple procedures, and contrasting policies among countries that are involved in international cooperation.

The Internet technology tools such as YouTube, Facebook, peer-to-peer networks, among others, are both enforcement tools of copyrights. On the other, they have turned into enablers of piracy because they offer their users means to share content without a rightful permit. At the same time, however, many platforms take an active part in the fight against piracy through the use of automated Copyright Infringement recognition systems[21]. These platforms use tools, like, YouTube's Content ID to scan for a match with copyrighted works in order to block them. Though, these measures can only work on a small scale because of the large amount of content that is uploaded daily and because the platforms rely heavily on algorithms to filter good content from the bad, an error which may lead to wrong takedown notices or failing to spot relatively complex cases of infringement[22].

The measures that have been taken through laws carry a further limitation that makes the enforcement difficult. The uses of conventional methods such as the takedown notifications which are provided for under the DMCA are slow and backward. These notices are usually issued at a slower rate that the rate at which content is shared online and hence there is almost no adequate means of combating piracy. Besides this, platforms can only remove the content once they have received certain complaints meaning there is a window that pirates use to spread their content across the various platforms[23].

Another problem is rooted in the reproduction of content through anonymous networks and the dark web. Since most of them operate in different encrypted networks and tools, they are able to upload the copyrighted content again after being pulled down from these conventional sites[24]. These networks

function outside of the pale of many a conventional crackdown technique, making takedown management methods inapplicable in most instances. Furthermore, due to the decentralized structure and anonymity of the dark web, it becomes much more difficult to track persons behind the sharing of materials which violate copyright.

Given these difficulties, modern copyright protection can only be viewed as enforcement that demands new approaches beyond pure legal regulation. Getting through one COVID or other pandemics is far from the solution, counteraction has to be more efficient, so international unity of governments, technology platforms, and international organizations is a must[25]. As one can see, both analyzes highlight longstanding issues and thus require adaptive legal reforms, as well as innovative technologies, including blockchain, AI-based monitoring, and the development of predictive enforcement models.

ENFORCEMENT STRATEGIES AND LEGAL MEASURES FOR PREVENTING DIGITAL COPYRIGHT INFRINGEMENT

Digital advancements and reforms are the issues of the copyright protection and management which are crucial to enhance through modern technologies. Blockchain technology provides an approach towards decentralized management of copyrights through record of ownership and licensing[26]. Licensing agreements and royalty payments are simplified to be executed with no intermediary interferences thanks to smart contracts enforced in blockchain networks. This keeps the process transparent and fluent since it would be harder for any restricted user to take advantage of any content owned by others. Blockchain also maintains an immutable record of transaction records and thereby ensures that piracy is checked while creators can securely register their works.

To say the least, AI has huge participation in today's copyright protection measures. Based on Artificial Intelligence, it becomes possible for an algorithm to recognize possible cases of copyright infringements as it analyzes impressively large amounts of content in real life time. AI-driven advanced enforcement mechanisms seek to locate infringement trends, which are preferred by platforms as well as enforcement entities to note violations and discourage such acts before they worsen[27]. This technology does not only accelerate enforcement but also assist in recognizing content and sites that are high risk; that way decreasing box reliance on purely backward-looking measures such as takedown notices.

To this end, there is need for establishing international cooperation and standardization mainly because copyright crime is global in nature. The operation of the www system is global hence for there to be order in the protection of copyright, there should be consistency in the laws used in the different jurisdictions. New specialized conventions have been signed to provide the necessary framework – the Berne convention and WIPO Copyright Treaty. But more efforts in the standardization process continue to be required in order to fill the gap between domestic laws and to come up with a common regime for enforcement. Participants from all sides of global governments and technology platforms have to work together with international organizations so as not to leave gaps exploited by pirates[28].

Consequently, awareness and compliance campaigns are an essential tool in creating respect for rights to intellectual properties to the public. That is why educating the public shows them the importance of consuming legal content but also the value of having copyright protection as an incentive to encourage people to stop piracy. Public enlightenment programs should educate the user's the legal consequences of engaging in acts that constitute violation of copyright and also educate them of lawful accesses such as; streaming platforms, online shops[29]. Additionally, promises to positive behaviour through rewards like subscription benefits or access to restricted content will drive people to the legal side of the content.

Each of these steps taken achieves the objective of putting in place a sound basis for the protection of digital copyright. Blockchain and AI serve as technical applications from the technological perspective while legal and social measures as seen from the international cooperation or public awareness campaign side. Now more than ever, it is important that a diverse range of strategies are adopted to engage the development of the digital environment, to safeguard inventors and to maintain the relevance of copyright laws[30].

There are several cases related to infringement of copyright and among the most following cases in digital copyright law is Google LLC v. Oracle America, Inc. In this long-tangled legal battle that took 10 years, Oracle accused Google of copyright infringement by using Java API code 11,500 lines of code in its Android operating system without permission. This was about whether the API was protected by copyright and second, whether Google's use was a fair use. In 2021, Google Encrypt the Java API exists to show that the use of the Java programming language was transformative and therefore made under the fair use rule of law. The decision spelled out problems of applying conventional copyright laws to new technologies especially in software and APIs when distinguishing the right to innovation and copyright protection in a very sensitive high technological environment[31].

Various technological solutions have been seen to be viable solutions for the management of copyrights including blockchain. There are record of ownership of digital contents by the help blockchain networks, thus allowing for decentralized licensing and royalty payment through smart contracts. This technology makes it possible for creators to keep the use of their works under their control, without high risks of piracy. In addition, the applications of blockchain projects for art also involve changing the approaches to owning and trading content that can be illustrated by non-fungible tokens (NFTs)[32].

YouTube's Content ID is an excellent example of another enhanced enforcement mechanism as discussed below. This automated tool checks each video that is uploaded to any website against a list of copyrighted data to prevent its use. When a match is found they get to decide whether they should deny the content access, make money off the video through advertisements or follow up on its performance. While having made a massive advancement in getting rid of copyright infringement, Content ID is criticized for occasional mistakes and inadmissibility of delicate cases, such as fair use.

The consumer interfaces of the streaming services (e.g., Netflix, Spotify) have a specific problem to regulate copyright while at the same time encouraging user engagement and creativity. These platforms dedicate funds towards protecting content through identification algorithms, but they also face legal issues when launching in different countries with relative or different copyright legislation[33]. Many social media platforms, such as TikTok, contribute to the problem since they share features somewhere between copyright-violation facilitators and unauthorized content moderators.

In these case studies and technologies, it becomes clear how challenging it is to enforce copyright in the digital environment. A praise-worthy and familiar legal case like Google v. Oracle exemplifies the necessity of the working systems flexibility so as to foster innovation while safeguarding the intellectual asset. At the same time, technological solutions such as blockchain and Content ID demonstrate how even achievements in this sphere can be problematic due to the need to use them in tandem with traditional instruments to address new challenges successfully[34]. The application of technology and its relationship with the law and users becomes the key to the future of its copyright enforcement.

LEGAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL GAPS AND FUTURE DIRECTIONS

The growing technological advancement has therefore created shortcomings in most of the modern IPR

systems most especially in copyright law of digital products. Unfortunately, most legal frameworks fail to provide solutions for different issues such as AI and blockchain. Current law and legal principles improvised for the physical works do not translate well to the intangible works created by AI and the Decentralized Digital world. One systematic issue is the attribution of authorship responsibility for AI-created works[35]. Copyright law generally vests work's ownership in human authors; however, creators of AI systems that may produce creative works raise legal questions regarding ownership: the developer, the user, or the AI itself?

Likewise, decentralized structures, like blockchain networks bring in legal enforcement challenges. These networks are decentralized and function independently of any over-arching command centre – the same applies for monitoring transactions for infringements of copyright laws. This means that content hosted on decentralized platforms including but not limited to NFTs present new challenge with regard to enforcement because infringing material can easily be disseminated without clear authority. These pictures reflect how the present laws are slow in adapting to the emerging innovations ultimately resulting in compartmentalized implementation among the various regions.

But new technologies such as block chain and Artificial Intelligence present new solutions that come with legal problems. The development of blockchain based systems allows introducing clear and unambiguous records of ownership, as well as the possibility of automating the license granting process within a smart contract, and guarantee fair distribution of royalties to the creators. However, certain blockchain environments remain unregulated and open to various abuses, including machining and future disagreement concerning the ownership of unique property like NFTs.

In the same way AI is also a constructive and destructive in equal measure. Predictive tools improve enforcement as AI looks at huge content as law enforcement monitors the content for signs of violations in real-time. However, the trust on AI enforcement tools brings in issues like false positives, where perfectly legitimate content is blocked for infringement. This could act as a very negative effect in that it may stifle creativity and narrow the domain of fair use which is a part of the copying right law. Copyright modernization and enforcement interest how copyright frameworks can promote inventiveness and innovation, without stifling it while protecting IPRs.

To fill the aforementioned gaps, legal changes are needed, and the primary goal should be to encourage productivity enhancement. The current copyright legislation needs to be amended with regard to AI-creations and decentralized systems. For AI-generated artworks, ownership is an important issue in conjunction with the means for handling them if they are collected in a blockchain manner; for blockchain accountability and NFT regulation related to copyrights. Besides, it is only possible to control cross-border copyright infringement through the process of international standardization of legal regulation. Joint work of countries can generate single guidelines where all the countries cooperate with each other focusing on the absence of significant legal loopholes among the joined states.

Parallel with changes in the regulatory framework, copyright frameworks need to grow more responsive and accommodating to new technologies. New measures should target prevention based on for example data analytics to enhance future enforcement activity against infringement. Awareness creation through public education also plays an important role since people need to learn about the need to consume legal content as well as learn the value of the property. Increasing users' awareness of the problem and including regular bonus content for ethical consumers can significantly decrease the use of piracy in combination with 'pirate' sites.

Addressing the gap of law and technology for lawyer readiness is best done through multi-faceted

approaches, compliance and policy changes as well as technology solutions that anticipate and facilitate lawyer adaptation. Any liberal copyright framework to be prepared for the future should mediate intellectual property rights and aid innovation and creativity. There must be partnership between governments, tech companies and legal bodies in order to come up with policies which are flexible enough this is in an attempt to curb the challenges which arise from AI, blockchain and decentralized platforms[36]. However, the development of new, innovation-friendly frameworks which guarantee the fair and efficient enforcement of copyrights may be a means through which the progressive demands of the digital environment can be met without stiffening growth and sustainability in creative industries.

CONCLUSION

The so-called emergence technologies have especially affected the legal framework of the ownership of products and services especially in the area of digital copyrights. Advancement in technologies like artificial intelligence, block chain and digital platform in content production and sharing has made the copyrights enforcement to be laborious. They are also the enablers of infringement, by providing people with means to share content without license, and the means for this to be stopped through automated detection and through using blockchain for tracking the paths of content. Such situation contributes to the confusion characteristic for the development of copyright law and poses new challenges for developing the strategies reflecting the new trends.

Due to incredible advancement in technology, legal solutions also need to evolve to effectively handle emerging issues. Static legal frameworks of copyright are usually inapt to accommodate emerging technologies like AI-driven created contents and Decentralized Networks hence law enforcement gaps. However, if it is taken to the extreme its application is likely to stifle creativity and innovation. It has become pertinent to note that while balancing the property rights, particular to the patent ownership it is important to keep innovation relatively open in other to encourage the prosperity of the overall digital environment. There is a need for development of laws to meet each new technological breakthrough as not to infringe on free speech and fair use.

There are three major areas of emerging technologies in the future copyright enforcement: AI (artificial intelligence), Blockchain, and Watermarking. Another way in which AI is used is in the strengthening of monitoring mechanisms to detect approaching violations. In the aspect of licensing and royalty payments, blockchain can generate and store the record of digital ownership which can be easily executed by smart contracts. Digital watermarking will also act as a deterrent while at the same time helping owners and creators of content to track their material across platforms. For jurisdictional matters and better implementation or enforcement of copyright law cooperation and synchronization of the law is the key.

Also, International cooperation in making policies will be required to address the enforcement deficiencies and mitigate cross country piracy. As a result of such changes, it is only probable that future successful copyright enforcement policies will involve: consumer awareness, pre-emption, multiple technical efficacies and maximum adaptability of policies. DRM or Digital Rights Management can be also helpful in preventing the online piracy that is taking place. Hence, by adapting such measures once can solve the problems that are arising due to advancement in technology that is resulting in copyright infringement.

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