

Berry-Karl -20050324163003

To: Julie L. Sigall
Associate Register for Policy & International Affairs

Date: 03/24/2005

From: Karl Berry
Title: President
Org: TeX Users Group

Comment:

TeX is a high-quality typesetting program, invented in 1978 by one of the world's leading computer scientists, Donald E. Knuth at Stanford University.

Along with its successors and variants, it is still in very active use today; a majority of the world's mathematical scientific literature is typeset with TeX, according to most estimations.

Many thousands of people have contributed to TeX over the years, mostly in the form of so-called "add-on packages", which perform TeX-related tasks of every conceivable kind, from very small to very large.

As you might imagine for such a span of time, many of these people have disappeared over the years, with no reasonable contact point. If they did not happen to write a complete copyright statement allowing others to take up their work, it becomes "lost". Certainly many people are careful about copyrights, but a substantial fraction are simply unaware of the issues.

Thus, the Copyright Office's initiative to be able to reclaim lost works like this is very welcome in the scientific and high-quality typesetting world of TeX. Many packages which cannot now be distributed or used could be given a new lease on life.

Thank you for your consideration.