

DIGITAL CITIZENS ISSUE ALERT: COPYRIGHT MODERNIZATION AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

Issue:

**House Judiciary Subcommittee looks at modernizing
copyright laws**

Question:

**When copyright laws are modernized how can we
best protect consumers?**

Congress is poised to debate the “great copyright law,” as the U.S. Register of Copyrights Maria Pallante puts it in testimony today.

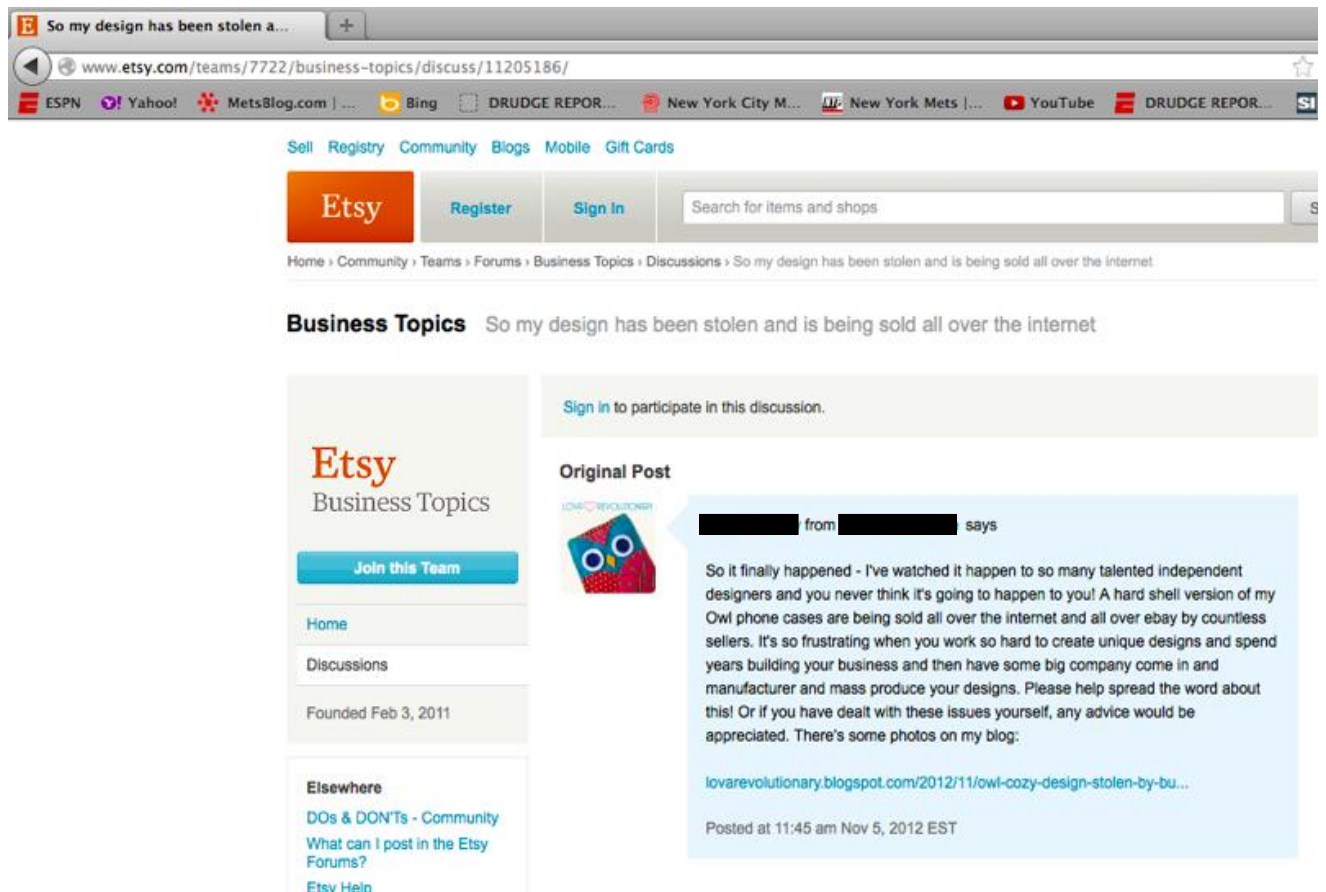
As Congress looks at copyright and digital works laws, the Digital Citizens Alliance’s focus is on ensuring that it protects Americans. Digital issues such as scams, counterfeits, illegal prescription drugs and content theft harm Americans and must be addressed. Our mission is to demonstrate the problem so we can collectively find an effective solution.

Digital Citizens urges Congress to consider two key issues:

- Ensuring that a modernization of laws works for all Americans.
- Ensuring that digital platforms don’t become a haven for criminal enterprises.

Ensuring that Modernization of Laws Works for All Americans

Copyright modernization is important for consumers and all Americans. Thanks to the Internet and technology, millions of Americans are now creators. We post our original video, photos online and sell our designs on sites like Etsy. But for every artistic endeavor, there seems to be someone lurking who wants to take advantage of creators, as at least one person found out the hard way:



The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying an Etsy forum page. The browser's address bar shows the URL: www.etsy.com/teams/7722/business-topics/discuss/11205186/. The page title is "So my design has been stolen and is being sold all over the internet". The forum post is part of the "Business Topics" section. The post content reads: "So it finally happened - I've watched it happen to so many talented independent designers and you never think it's going to happen to you! A hard shell version of my Owl phone cases are being sold all over the internet and all over ebay by countless sellers. It's so frustrating when you work so hard to create unique designs and spend years building your business and then have some big company come in and manufacturer and mass produce your designs. Please help spread the word about this! Or if you have dealt with these issues yourself, any advice would be appreciated. There's some photos on my blog: lovarevolutionary.blogspot.com/2012/11/owl-cozy-design-stolen-by-bu... Posted at 11:45 am Nov 5, 2012 EST". The post is attributed to a user with a profile picture of an owl.

Copyright law has to be made easier to let our citizen creators protect their works, especially against criminal enterprises that may be out of the reach of U.S. law enforcement and courts.

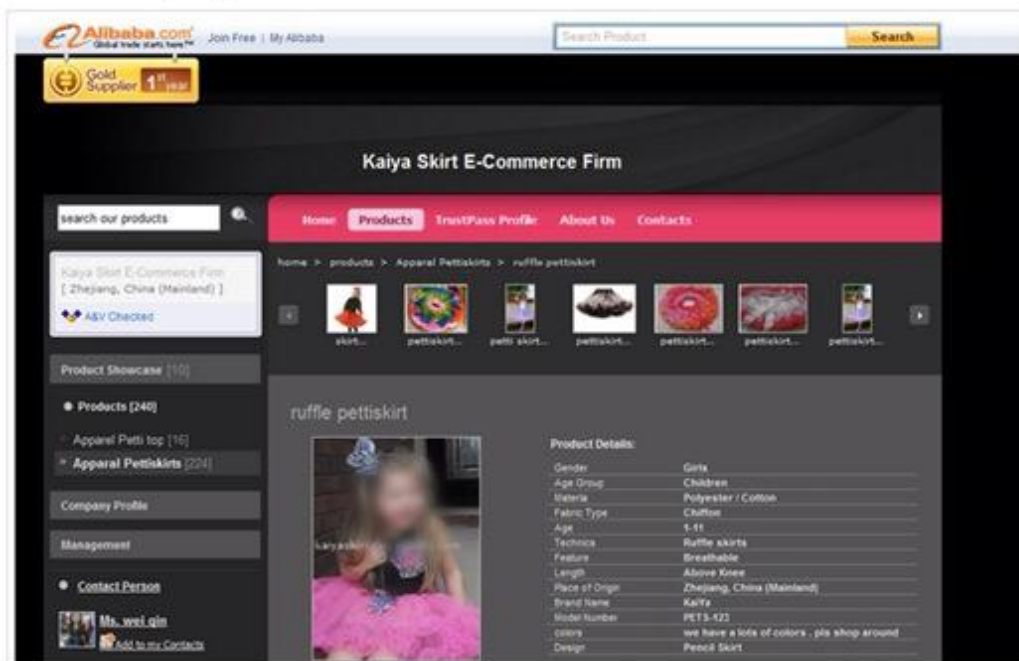
There are troubling cases where citizens have seen their digital works abused. Consider the case of the author of the popular blog MomDot. She used photos of her daughter on her blog. She was shocked to see those same photos used by a company based in China – without her permission - selling girls clothing.

My daughters pictures stolen and used in ad

JUNE 9, 2010 BY TRISHA 100 COMMENTS

Well, today got interesting.

Erin from [This Mom Shops](#) sent me a link of my daughter on a Chinese based wholesale company website that is using my daughter as a sample for their products- pictures that were stolen from my blog.

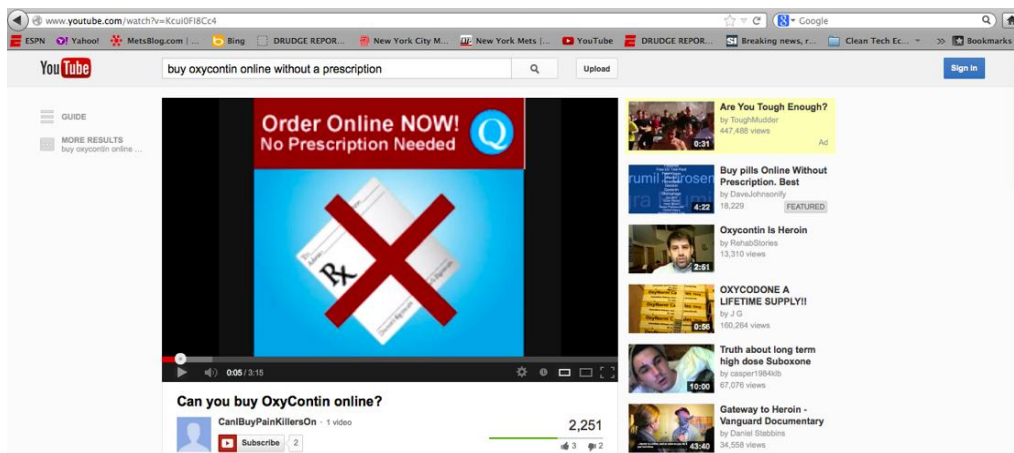


Ensuring Digital Platforms Aren't a Haven for Criminal Enterprises

Modernizing our copyright and digital works laws must put consumer protections first and foremost. Our laws must address how increasingly criminals are using digital platforms for their benefit.

When a criminal can make money off ads tied to video on YouTube that's sole purpose is to show how to buy prescription drugs illegally over the Internet that should be a red flag.

In the following screen shots, please notice the highlighted boxes in the right columns – those are ads found after the search for an illegal prescription.



Conclusion

Digital Citizens Alliance calls on Congress, as it modernizes copyright and digital works laws, to place consumer protection as a national imperative. Scams, content theft and even the reported privacy intrusions disclosed last week of our First Lady and other prominent citizens underscore the challenge we face in protecting our citizens. Digital Citizens will be active in raising awareness to consumers and demonstrating the harm criminal enterprises can pose to our citizens. As we demonstrate the dangers scams, counterfeits, illegal prescription drugs and content theft can pose, we hope by demonstrating the problem so we can do our part to point to effective solutions.

About Digital Citizens Alliance

Digital Citizens is a consumer-oriented coalition focused on educating the public and policy makers on the threats that consumers face on the Internet and the importance for Internet stakeholders – individuals, government and industry - to make the Web a safer place.