

Society of American Archivists

Overview of Copyright Issues

Prepared by the SAA Committee on Advocacy and Public Policy and the SAA Intellectual Property Working Group. For more detailed information about these and other public policy issues, see the Society of American Archivists' [Public Policy Agenda](#).

SAA Position:

- SAA believes that copyright law should move intellectual property into the public domain as soon as possible, and should not be a mechanism to ensure near-perpetual income from creative effort long-since expended. Overlong terms of copyright protection inhibit the growth of the public domain to the detriment of the public interest.
- SAA supports all efforts to reduce the term of copyright.
- SAA supports the expansion of Section 108(h) of the U.S. Copyright Act to include all types of unpublished materials. For some media routinely found in archives, long copyright protection terms threaten their very survival.
- SAA supports updating the U.S. Copyright Act to reflect the realities of the digital world in which we live, including the restriction in Section 108(b) that limits access to digital copies of unpublished works to the premises of the archives and/or libraries.

SAA will:

- Advocate in favor of amendments to the U.S. Copyright Act that facilitate making archival material available for research and use.
- Oppose amendments to the U.S. Copyright Act that extend the term of copyright.

SAA Briefs and Position Statements on Copyright Issues:

Archivists and the Term of Copyright (2015):

[Link, once approved]

SAA Opposes Trans-Pacific Partnership Agreement Provisions (2015):

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-opposes-trans-pacific-partnership-agreement-provisions>

Archivists and Section 108 of the Copyright Act (2014):

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-archivists-and-section-108-of-the-copyright-act>

Issue Brief: Orphan Works (2014):

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/issue-brief-orphan-works>

Statement to World Intellectual Property Organization Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (2011):

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/statement-of-saa-representative-to-world-intellectual-property-organization-standing-comm>

Statement on Copyright Protection of Pre-1972 Recordings (2011):

<http://www2.archivists.org/statements/saa-comments-on-copyright-protection-of-pre-1972-sound-recordings>