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12:41 PM

To: FN-OMB-IntellectualProperty
Subject: Intellectual Property Rights, Joint Strategic Plan

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Dear Ms. Espinel,

The Copyright Alliance has informed me of this welcome invitation from the Obama Administration to share my thoughts on my rights as a creator.

I'm an award-winning ebook author with eleven digital works available for download via the internet. Some of my books are purchase to read, others are offered as free reads. Some are available at Barnes and Noble, Amazon.com, Fictionwise, and other various legitimate booksellers.

To date, I've had **more than \$200,000** of my "for purchase" ebooks pirated through various torrent and pirate sites around the internet. As a mother of two boys, one in preschool, the other a senior in high school, I can't express to you enough what this financial loss means to me. Had that money been made through legitimate channels, even after my publisher and editor took their share, I would have been left with enough to pay off my house, all my debts, put my oldest through community college, and start a college fund for my youngest son. Writing in my full time job. And \$200,000 is significant, by any means.

It is incredibly frustrating for authors to have to search out and find our books being offered illegally in order to take them down, and there is currently no help to track or remove the work from sites that host it illegally. Many of the sites make authors fill out bogus forms, or provide unnecessary information to get these books down. In other cases, usually when facing torrent links, a site will claim that they are not responsible for any content on the site, and blatantly tell you not to bother sending a take down notice since the material is not hosted on their servers. And yet, nothing is done to take these sites down even though they are directly contributing to the theft of ebooks, music, and software.

There are some sites, such as Demonoid.com, Underground.mn, and Astatalk.com that despite multiple take down notices, do not remove your content, or they take it down for a short time only to upload the content again once a member requests the titles.

There are new trends emerging among piracy and torrent websites that make it extremely difficult for authors to get their pirated material off the net. Some sites now offer "membership areas" that require people to pay a monthly fee to allow access to private forum where they upload illegal material : ebooks, movies, TV shoes, music, video games, and software. They are basically selling access to stolen material.

I have also had to fight to get my digital books removed from online auction sites such as ebay.com and blujay.com. In one instance, I had to go through

the Louisiana State Department of Justice to see any action involving my pirated ebooks on an auction site. That complaint is still on file. My books were eventually taken down from that site, but the site still exists - and other authors are being pirated there. This is simply unacceptable.

People who upload books, music, and software are typically repeat offenders. They typically feel they are playing Robin Hood among people who can afford to take huge hits financially. However, once a typical user is educated on the harm they are doing to authors, they continue to pirate material. There is a mentality, if I can do it, I'm going to do it and since I'm anonymous, you can't do anything to stop me.

I don't believe there is a way to completely kill internet piracy. There will always be an underground movement for illegal file sharing. However, **it should be made as difficult as possible for the average internet user to pirate intellectual material.** The best way to do this is to shut down the forums and websites where pirates gather. Sites like btjunkie, astatalk, demonoid, rapidshare, filewap, underground.mn, and other such places that take a rogue attitude to copyright theft should be taken down. Period. There is no legal usage for these sites. Sites based on the purpose of illegally sharing copyrighted material shouldn't have the right to remain open. This isn't free speech, and it certainly isn't fair use. These people should also have to pay damages based on the files uploaded, to the authors they have harmed.

Despite many ISP's terms and conditions of service, pirate/torrent websites continue to function and are left unchecked to continue the cycle of theft. ISPs should also be held accountable for allowing sites to run that blatantly operate for the purpose of infringing copyrighted material.

Some ISPs claim they cannot monitor what is being created by those who use their service, but that is bogus. There are webcrawlers that can scour the internet for web addresses. Every internet compatible computer in the US has a word search feature that can turn out hundreds, even thousands of results. If you asked these same ISP's what they are doing to guard against sites promoting animal or human abuses, and other such illegal content, they will come at you with a different answer. They are doing *everything* they can to prevent those kinds of online crime through their services.

I am in no way trying to compare apples to oranges, there are certainly crimes out there more significant than theft, but that is not to say it isn't hurting people. However, it's a matter of profit and perspective with these ISPs. Piracy and copyright theft are not taboo, therefore it is okay to say that they cannot be policed with any effectiveness. This must change. Attitudes toward piracy and intellectual property theft must change.

I sincerely hope that something will be done to help struggling artists protect their work from online pirates and predators. The constant struggle takes it out of us not just financially, but creatively as well.

Sincerely,
Corrina Thompson, ebook author
Jonesboro-Hodge, Louisiana