

Summer 2017

Book Review: Digital Rights Management: The Librarian's Guide

Yumi Ohira

University of Nebraska at Omaha, yohira@unomaha.edu

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/crisslibfacpub>



Part of the [Higher Education Commons](#), and the [Library and Information Science Commons](#)

Please take our feedback survey at: https://unomaha.az1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8cchtFmpDyGfBLE

Recommended Citation

Ohira, Yumi, "Book Review: Digital Rights Management: The Librarian's Guide" (2017). *Criss Library Faculty Publications*. 33.

<https://digitalcommons.unomaha.edu/crisslibfacpub/33>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by the Dr. C.C. and Mabel L. Criss Library at DigitalCommons@UNO. It has been accepted for inclusion in Criss Library Faculty Publications by an authorized administrator of DigitalCommons@UNO. For more information, please contact unodigitalcommons@unomaha.edu.

Digital Rights Management: The Librarian's Guide

Edited by Catherine A. Lemmer and Carla P. Wale. Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016. 224 pages. ISBN: 9781442263758.

Reviewed by Yumi Ohira, *Digital Initiatives Librarian/Assistant Professor, Dr. C. C. and Mabel L. Criss Library, University of Nebraska at Omaha, 6001 Dodge Street, Omaha, NE; yohira@unomaha.edu*

Over the past decade, the dramatic proliferation of technologies in the expanding digital world has transformed the way we operate and interact with various forms of information. Enhanced access to digital information has empowered both individuals and libraries. People have gained access to such digital media as streaming audio and video, DVDs, e-books, e-journals, research subscription databases, websites, and other sources of digital information. This enhanced access has enabled libraries to deliver more effective and scalable services for their users in the digital environment. These digital movements and technological advances, including a drastic increase of Web-based tools, make sharing information easy and inexpensive.

Corresponding to the increase of digital information available in developing technological environments, copyright protection of digital media has emerged as a significant challenge to libraries. Copyright laws govern library functions such as acquiring and providing access to digital media for user needs: digital rights management (DRM) systematically prevents the illegal distribution of copyrighted digital media. DRM technologies control what the user can do with digital media. For example, DRM technologies limit a consumer's ability to copy, transfer, or duplicate a digital work such as a DVD or software. When giving public access to digital media, libraries need to ensure the right balance between the needs of users and the rights of creators. Addressing these issues, *Digital Rights Management, The Librarian's Guide*, examines the circumstances surrounding DRM implementation for copyrighted digital media and guides readers, especially librarians, to better understand DRM for the best practices in the actively changing digital environment.

The term "DRM" is commonly misunderstood. DRM is not copyright law. DRM is about the technology used to control or restrict the use of digital content. In chapter 1, "What Is Digital Rights Management?," the authors define DRM as "technology that controls access to content on digital devices" and "technology employed to protect the rights of the copyright holder" (1). With this correct definition of DRM, readers explore how DRM controls the use of copyrighted digital media, who uses DRM, why DRM is used, and what librarians encounter with DRM. This chapter also addresses the debate over the opposition of DRM via U.S. copyright law, including fair use. After providing foundational information about

DRM, the editors' arrangement of subsequent chapters allows readers to proceed independently based on readers' interests.

Chapter 2, "A Primer on Digital Rights Management Technologies," categorizes DRM schemes based on four functions: "prevention, restriction, deterrence, and detection" (27).

To ensure that library users have access to copyrighted digital materials in accordance with the law, librarians should have knowledge associated with DRM that directly affects their functions in the library environment. In this chapter, its authors introduce a variety of DRM technologies and systems that identify illegal copies of copyrighted digital media. Included are watermarking and digital fingerprints, digital signatures and time stamps, keys, digital certificates, broadcast encryption, the content scrambling system, and licenses or end-user license agreements. This chapter's content provides readers with a greater understanding of what is happening to digital content with respect to DRM.

Librarians are responsible for the selection of library resources and for building their collections. It is the function of librarians to determine which resources, such as e-books, audio and video materials, and e-journals, should be acquired and made available to their users. These selection decisions are traditionally based on the librarians' knowledge of their user needs and interests, not the authorization method. However, emerging DRM technologies, which include the process of authentication for access control, affect the ability of librarians to enable user access to library digital materials controlled by DRM. Librarians need to determine what type of systems are required for digital e-readers such as Kindle or Nook and which resources they should choose, as "certain DRM systems only work on certain readers" (51). Chapter 3, "Understanding and Utilizing Digital Authentication," introduces the types of DRM authentication, examines how each DRM authentication system works, and determines how it affects the user. This chapter guides librarians in their ability to make the best decision for their systems based on authentication and the user's ability to access digital materials.

Changing technologies were traditionally believed to be a means to improve library operations and services. As DRM is now commonly used, its technologies can cause challenges associated with access control to use restrictions on library digital materials. Chapters 4 and 5 advise librarians on how to manage DRM in the library environment. In chapter 4, "Organization and Workflow, Leaving Your Library to Make the Most of DRM," its authors acquaint librarians with how to implement DRM into existing library structure and work flows, including staffing and staff education. For the successful adoption of DRM in the library, librarians need to understand "the need for meaningful access and user privacy" and "the fine line between being a body that creates information and one that uses information" (67). Some interactive materials for digital media, such as computer game software and simulation tools that are licensed for individuals, are difficult for li-

libraries to collect. DRM can be an impediment to their successful collection development. Chapter 5, "Provisions for Digital Collections and Sample Language," provides useful information about the issues regarding DRM via collection development policies. At the beginning of this chapter, its authors identify and analyze factors that librarians should consider when reviewing digital content contracts and addressing licensing terms for collection development policies. Using this chapter as a guide, readers can explore best practices in collection development planning for growing collections of digital media in libraries.

Especially in libraries, open access (OA) has emerged as a crucial issue in academia. Libraries have encouraged their campus communities to publish their scholarly works and make them freely accessible through institutional repositories, as sharing knowledge through OA publishing can benefit their institutions significantly. In chapter 6, "Managing Digital Rights in Open Access Works," its authors present an interesting critique of the relationship between OA and DRM, which is likely to be incompatible. Through this chapter, readers explore innovative challenges of applying DRM technologies for OA publishing.

DRM is an effective means of access control that restricts a copyrighted digital work and protects the interests of the copyright holder. However, it may seriously threaten users' privacy, as DRM systems can both compromise and protect users' private information. Chapter 7, "The Quandary of Digital Rights and Information Privacy," provides an insightful discussion about the erosion of privacy in the Internet era, copyright and privacy law, and the library user privacy issues associated with DRM implementation. Privacy is a highly important topic for all people. This chapter educates readers and makes them aware of the best practices for protecting information in the library environment.

DRM systematically approaches copyright protection for digital media. If DRM is unbalanced between the needs of users and the rights of creators, DRM can control a library's ability to disseminate digital media, including OA scholarly works, to users. How librarians understand and perceive relevant copyright laws as well as DRM's primary role shape how digital and intellectual property is protected. Chapter 8, "Digital Rights Management and Copyright Law," introduces beneficial copyright information, including the general principles and the basic concepts about copyright law that librarians need to know when dealing with DRM challenges in the library environment.

After reading the first eight chapters, readers will have a better understanding of DRM technologies along with digital media and the scope and reach of the associated access rights. The concluding chapter of this book, chapter 9, "DRM Redux," then challenges readers with a question asking them to rethink their answer from a different perspective: "Is DRM necessary in the library environment?" (173). Readers are tasked with constructing a response based on the complicated factors that librarians need to consider when dealing with DRM to better serve their library users.

In the digital age, the ability to distribute copyrighted digital works through digital media (CDs, DVDs, and so on) and the Internet access technologies have brought new challenges to prevent unauthorized copy and use. This digital revolution has also changed libraries, library services, and librarian expertise and caused the movement away from traditional functions of libraries (collection development, cataloging and access, and user services). As libraries acquire and secure ownership of digital content and make it accessible to their users, librarians need to be aware of their core roles in the digital age. Overall, this book provides insightful and thought-provoking points associated with DRM, including the effects of DRM technologies on libraries. This book guides all readers, especially librarians who struggle to meet the challenge of providing digital content, to better understand what is currently happening to copyrighted digital content on legal and technological bases and to prepare them for future prospects in the digital age.