

Authors and Apparatus

A Media History of Copyright

MONIKA DOMMANN

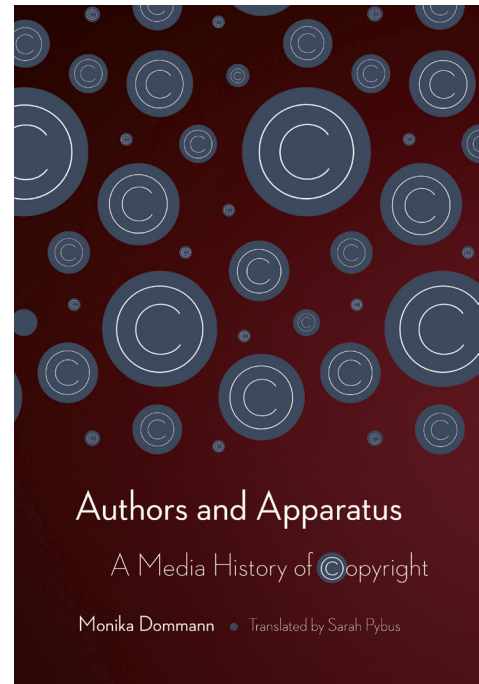
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Copyright is under siege. From file sharing to vast library scanning projects, new technologies, actors, and attitudes toward intellectual property threaten the value of creative work. However, while digital media and the Internet have made making and sharing perfect copies of original works almost effortless, debates about protecting authors' rights are nothing new. In this sweeping account of the evolution of copyright law since the mid-nineteenth century, Monika Dommann explores how radical media changes—from sheet music and phonographs to photocopiers and networked information systems—have challenged and transformed legal and cultural concept of authors' rights.

Dommann provides a critical transatlantic perspective on developments in copyright law and mechanical reproduction of words and music, charting how artists, media companies, and lawmakers in the United States and western Europe approached the complex tangle of technological innovation, intellectual property, and consumer interests. From the seemingly innocuous music box, invented around 1800, to BASF's magnetic tapes and Xerox machines, she demonstrates how copyright has been continuously destabilized by emerging technologies, requiring new legal norms to regulate commercial and private copying practices. Without minimizing digital media's radical disruption to notions of intellectual property, Dommann uncovers the deep historical roots of the conflict between copyright and media—a story that can inform present-day debates over the legal protection of authorship.

MONIKA DOMMANN is Professor of Modern History at the University of Zurich.



“*Authors and Apparatus* is a fascinating and impressive work of historical scholarship. Engaged with contemporary concerns about the impacts of new media on intellectual property, this book introduces a rich historical dimension and a transnational perspective that are frequently absent in copyright debates. Its lively, accessible style will attract a broad readership.”

—Kizer S. Walker, Cornell University

“Cutting a wide swath through media technologies and the laws governing them in the US and Europe, *Authors and Apparatus* shows the digital revolution has merely echoed battles fought in the analogue era. It is a fascinating pre-history of the digital revolution.”

—Peter Baldwin, UCLA and NYU

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