

Abstract Submission for APCA Inaugural Conference

3D Printing and Enforcement: A Copyright Perspective from Finland and China - Are We so Different?

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Abstract

3D printing is a disruptive technology which is already changing industrial practices and consumer behavior. In hopes of creating new economic growth several countries – including Finland and China – are investing to this technology. Due to the technological nature of 3D printing the threshold for entering the markets of manufacturing is now lower than ever before. However, this technological development attracts some downsides. Enforcing IP rights is coming more difficult for the right owner when manufacturing becomes decentralized and distribution of digital files happens through the Internet. Especially, industries like design and art are now in the most vulnerable position

Studying differences between Finland and China gives a unique opportunity to examine regulation capabilities and effectiveness of disruptive technologies in a situation where legal, economic and cultural backgrounds are different but the level of technology is relatively the same. Do national differences in copyright law and enforcement determine the country's ability regulate the use of 3D printing technology?

The paper compares Finnish and Chinese copyright laws and effectiveness of enforcement and discusses whether these differences matter in the context of 3D printing technology. Also, the paper considers alternatives. The paper argues that national differences in copyright law and copyright enforcement have a minimal or secondary role when regulating 3D printing technology. This is because technological characteristics of 3D printing technology make enforcement difficult, expensive and at some instance even impossible thus undermining copyright law. Instead, national differences in how nations support the adoption and development of the new technology to its economy play greater role by creating a way to regulate indirectly the use of 3D printing technology.