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Exemption to Prohibition on Circumvention of Copyright Protection Systems for
Access Control Technologies

Comments re: 7B

I am a film and media studies teacher, a scholar of digital culture, and an independent vidder. As someone who practices, teaches, and studies digital remix culture, I believe it is vital that our creative culture, manifest in video remixing, is not stifled by legal threats.

My videos combine the traditions of fan vidding with those of experimental film. They offer cultural critique and explore our investment in popular media texts by calling attention to the form and construction of those texts. For example, one video of mine examines the intersection of discourses of race, class, and masculinity in a contemporary TV crime show, while another explores the transformation of film noir elements—including gender, sexuality, and morality--in a contemporary TV melodrama. Another considers the emotional ownership felt by fans in the music of a beloved independent musical artist. All of these videos use remixing to consider questions of representation and audience engagement in popular media.

In order to make these videos effective artistic expressions, I need to use DVDs to work at a base level with the highest quality video files. I edit the video files in Final Cut Pro, layering my own chosen filters and effects on them. It is crucial that I start with the base of a clear, high quality image in order to be able to build on and transform that image based on my specific critical and creative intent for a specific video.

My videos enter into an ever-evolving cultural conversation, in which members of digital or “read/write” culture collectively explore the meaning of popular media texts—both fictional and news--at a given moment. I am both a participant in and a researcher and teacher of remix culture, a culture that includes musical remix, fan video, and political remix. One central purpose of my videos is indeed to be part of the contemporary cultural conversation; thus, it is vital that I have timely access to video clips of current events.

As a teacher of remix culture, and specifically a scholar whose work explores the millennial generation, I am especially aware of how vital issues of media literacy

are for today's teenagers and young adults. It is crucial that today's teenagers and young adults have the tools to be authors and producers rather than just consumers of our creative culture. I have just taught a class on Remix Culture in which students were clearly driven by their own interest and desire to learn the tools of authorship as well as to understand the logics of the digital culture that they inhabit. Being able to work with DVD footage empowers young people to understand themselves as active participants in our culture, and indeed I saw this transformation happen in my students over the course of the semester, as they learned to use digital authorship tools to offer their own voice to cultural conversations. Students created some truly moving and effective creative work; some made political remixes while others remixed popular music and video to explore their investments in contemporary media culture, or to consider questions of gender and race in popular media. The videos they make are non-commercial and made for the intent of cultural critique and creative expression. It is vital that their active participation as creators in our culture be protected and allowed to continue and grow, both within and beyond the classroom.