EDUCAUSE Declaration of Interest in Promoting Distance Learning through Digital Technologies

EDUCAUSE, a non-profit association of over 1500 American colleges and universities will be an active participant in the Copyright Office’s request for public input on the promotion of distance education through digital technologies.

EDUCAUSE has made a commitment to work collaboratively with others to understand and demonstrate how the application of information technology in higher education can address the major problems facing American higher education today. One component of our resolve to improve distance education is EDUCAUSE’s National Learning Infrastructure Initiative (NLII). The NLII’s mission is to create new collegiate learning environments that harness the power of information technology to improve the quality of teaching and learning at reasonable costs. Advancing our understanding of how distance learning affects the concept of a “virtual university”, where computers and communication technologies expand access to learning resources, is a mission-critical issue of NLII.

EDUCAUSE is an active leader in analyzing the technical issues involved with distance learning. While all of the questions posed to the Copyright Office for consideration are equally important, EDUCAUSE is particularly interested in questions six and seven that focus on whether technological measures and digital licensing provide viable remedies to this dilemma. While potential solutions, such technologies will only be effective if transparent protocols are in place.

As new communication-information technologies are available, balancing the rights of content creators with rights of fair use and special exemptions for education continues to be an important challenge. EDUCAUSE looks forward to working with the Copyright Office and other interested parties in ensuring that the balance maintained by existing copyright law continues in the digital realm.

Sincerely,

Brian Hawkins
EDUCAUSE President