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In the September 2008 issue I discussed the distinction between copyright protection and copyright registration, and the benefits of properly and timely registering your copyrighted works. To recap in brief, registration is a prerequisite to filing suit for infringement, and timely registration entitles a copyright owner to enhanced damages and attorney's fees in the event of successful infringement litigation. Copyright registration also provides public notice of a copyright owner's claim, and the registration certificate serves as evidence that the copyrighted work listed on the certificate is validly copyrightable, eliminating the need to prove that point at an infringement trial.

In this installment I address the mechanics of copyright registration and offer a brief primer on how to use the U.S. Copyright Office's new online registration system, dubbed "eCO" for "electronic Copyright Office," which launched in July.

Online or On Paper

Before eCO was launched, the only way to register a copyright was to complete one of several registration forms and mail it to the Office, along with the appropriate payment and a copy of the work for which copyright registration was sought. The whole process took ages, and while registration was effective on the date the registration materials were received by the Office, it was nearly impossible to determine the status of a particular application until a certificate, or a letter requesting additional information, arrived months later.

eCO, while still not a model of speed and efficiency, has improved the process dramatically. Now registrants can track the status of their claims online, upload deposit material electronically (the deposit requirement is discussed below), and pay by credit card or electronic check. And the registration fee is lower; it's now \$35 per registration, versus \$45 to file on paper.

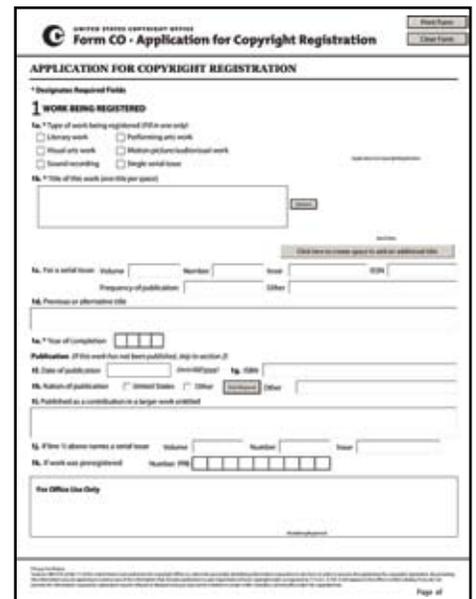
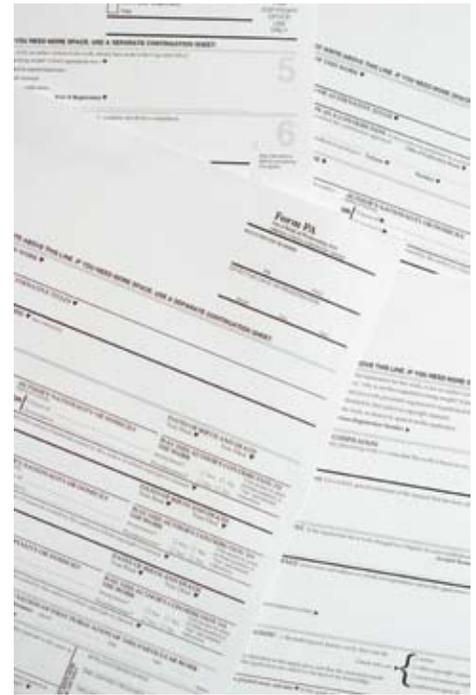
For those who still want to file on paper, the Office recently released a new single registration form - Form CO - that replaces the battery of forms from which registrants previously had to select. The form is available online at www.copyright.gov/forms. The fee remains \$45 for paper applications. Although the Office has made its forms available online and electronically "fillable" for some time, Form CO is new in that it converts the text to a single barcode that the Office scans when it processes your application.

A word of caution: mail to the Office can take weeks to be properly delivered because of the security procedures for mail to government offices. Thus, deliveries by courier, like FedEx and UPS, are the best way to send materials to the Office. Regardless of which method you select, always use a traceable service, so that you have evidence of the date on which the Office received your application.

Registering via eCO

The Copyright Office's online registration portal is located at www.copyright.gov/register. After you create an account and log into the system, you will reach the eCO's homepage, from which you may check the status of existing registration claims, or start a new one.

The registration process can be divided into



Top: The Copyright Office's old Form PA (for works of performing arts) which is still available for those who want to use it.

Bottom: The Copyright Office's new, unified Form CO which can be used to register various types of works. All photos by Chris Reed.

three basic steps: the application, payment, and uploading the deposit material.

The first step is to determine which type of work you seek to register. For planetarians, the most commonly used classifications include literary works (books, curriculum materials, exhibition text), works of performing arts (show scripts), visual arts (images, illustrations, photographs), sound recordings (soundtracks), and motion picture and audiovisual works (full shows). There are some technical peculiarities with the Office's definitions of each type of work, so be sure to read explana-

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