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Sorry, did you just say Copyleft?

Being fairly new to the world of open resources, I was intrigued when I came across the topic of Copyleft. As a traditional classroom teacher, I am well aware of Copyright laws and often refer to the poster above the photocopier at my school before I make copes for my students. I had never heard of the term Copyleft before so it was time to read on and investigate.

Copyleft is a type of Copyright that can be placed on an individual's work with the intent of letting others use, remix and redistribute the material. The term was first coined by software users so that program code could be shared with others and so that changes and alterations could be made to the code with consequences. More information on the history of the term Copyleft and the need to develop openness can be found at the GNU site. The idea behind creating Copyleft was to increase openness and allow coders to program, modified and improve upon existing software. The concept of openness has spread to include other forms of materials than software.

In order for Copyleft to work, the original creator still needs to place a Copyright on the material. This may seem strange at first, but the issue comes from the possibility of someone using the free, open material and then placing a Copyright on the material. In doing so, the person with the Copyrighted material would own the rights and could profit financially monetarily or otherwise. So, in order for Copyleft to prevail, we still need the legality that Copyright provides. If you wish to further investigate the differences

between Copyright, Copyleft and Creative Commons, Melanie Sorensen's blog this week includes a chart that compares and contrasts these terms.

Given the idea of Copyleft and the transitioning of placing so much material online, do we still need to have a Copyright? I think the answer to this is more of a personal choice. Some feel that ideas should be rewarded with financial gain and others think that ideas and knowledge belong to everyone. I've attached a short video that explains the differences between the two and also shows how we can try to move more to the idea of Copyleft which allows everyone to benefit.

For myself, I can see the advantages of moving educational resources online for the greater good of creating a leveled playing field for learners to gain access to educational resources. However, I can see the dilemma artists, performers and writers might face if there wasn't a market for their work. This is a new area for educators and only time will tell which path we will follow.

Copyleft references:

<http://www.gnu.org/Copyleft/>

<https://aintza.wordpress.com/2010/01/28/Copyright-vs-Copyleft-a-short-introduction-to-these-licenses/>

<http://www.tracyjonglawfirm.com/ipblog/?p=302>