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Critical Examination of The Effectiveness of Uganda's Copyright Law

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ABSTRACT

This paper critically analyses the effectiveness of Uganda's copyright law. Uganda's copyright legal regime is not elaborate enough and there is limited knowledge of its existence when it comes to authors of works in Uganda. Lack of proper enforcement of the existing laws is equally what has backtracked the protection of works resulting in widespread infringement and abuse of copyright-protected works under the guise of fair use. In this light, the study calls for an upgrade of technology to be done to help to collect societies execute the mandate efficiently because copyright infringement today involves the use of computers and technology especially with the widespread internet all over the country where many people access copyrighted content illegally like music online but where there is developed software to monitor such illegal activities, this would reduce copyright infringement. It is also the researcher's recommendation that cooperating collective management societies should be established to enable cooperation between copyright owners and consumers of such content and a result to support such copyright owners in monitoring where and how much content is used. This reduces the illegal reproduction of copyrighted protected content.

Keywords: Collective management, Common law, Copyright contents, Copyright law, Statutes

INTRODUCTION

The history of copyright law started with early privileges and monopolies granted to printers of books [1]. Copyright law can be traced back to 1557 in England. At first, the "copyright" was used to censor printing by giving the Crown the ability to confiscate unapproved books. By 1695, however, the concept had come to imply a permanent monopoly over the publishing of maps and books - a monopoly that was jealously held by the Crown-chartered guild of printers and booksellers [2]. That changed in 1710 when Parliament broke the monopoly by passing the Statute of Anne, which established fixed term limits for copyrights. The British Statute of Anne 1710 was the first copyright statute. The Statute was an act of the Parliament of Great Britain passed in 1710, which was the first statute to provide for copyright regulated by the government and courts, rather than by private parties [3]. Initially, copyright law only applied to the copying of books. Over time other uses such as translations and derivative works were made subject to copyright and copyright covers a wide range of works, including maps, performances, paintings,

photographs, sound recordings, motion pictures, and computer programs [4]. Today national copyright laws have been standardized to some extent through international and regional agreements such as the Berne Convention. Although there are consistencies among nations' copyright laws, each jurisdiction has separate and distinct laws and regulations about copyright. Some jurisdictions also recognize the moral rights of creators, such as the right to be credited for their work [5]. Uganda's copyright law traces its origins to colonial times under British rule. Before Uganda's independence in 1962, common law and statutes of general application were applicable in Uganda. This included the Intellectual Property Rights laws of Britain[6]. This was so until 1991 when the Supreme Court of Uganda in Uganda Motors Limited vs Wavah Holdings Limited [7] held that the acts of general application no longer have any place in the jurisdiction of the High Court of Uganda and this was to be that way from then. As well noted, most laws of Uganda are a replica of the laws of the United Kingdom, this is where 'the copyright law of Uganda traces its applicability to

Uganda. This existed not until the adoption of the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act of 2006. Uganda is enriched with copyright protection instruments; the constitution, statutes, international conventions, regulations, and government authorities all to ensure the protection of the aspect of copyright [8]. However, this is seen as theoretical due to the growing cases of copyright infringement in the presence of copyright laws. The legal framework is a lame duck because of the lack of proper and effective enforcement. This can be attributed to several issues by the copyright holders and the general public has a poor perception of how

The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda 1995, as amended

This is the supreme law of Uganda with binding force on all authorities and persons and any law or custom be it legislation, statutes, or regulations. The constitution provides that the fundamental rights and freedoms of the individual are inherent and not granted by the State [9]. This provision encompasses the different rights of authors under copyright and it further states that the rights and freedoms of the individual and groups enshrined there under have to be respected, upheld, and promoted by all organs and agencies of Government and by all persons [10]. Possession of copyright in any works is property to the author and in this regard, the constitution provides for the protection from deprivation of property which includes copyright infringement by stating that every person has a right to own property either individually or in association with others and no person shall be compulsorily deprived of property or any interest in or right over property of any description [11] except where the following conditions are satisfied;

a) The taking of possession or acquisition is necessary for public use or in the

The Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act, Cap 210

This Act establishes the Uganda Registration Services Bureau [12] as a body corporate with perpetual succession; a common seal ad may sue or be sued in its corporate name. The Act laid down several objects of the bureau but of importance is to administer and give effect to the relevant laws provide registration services and collect and account for all revenue provided for under these laws. The Act further provides that to achieve the above-mentioned objective the bureau has among others several functions including carrying out all

The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act

The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act applies to any work, including work, created or published before the commencement of the Act, which has not yet fallen into the public domain whether the work is created by a citizen of Uganda or a person resident in Uganda; first published in Uganda, irrespective of the nationality

copyrights are protected and their significance in Uganda's legal umbrella, lack of copyright infringement prosecutions, the high levels of illiteracy, lack of political will, inability to enforce the copyright legal regime, etc. As a result, this lack of enforcement of the copyright letter of the law as laid out in the various legal documents curtails hinders, or destroys the spirit of the law of copyright law which is to spur creativity and innovation and reward or acknowledge creators, authors, and innovators. This article examines the effectiveness of copyright laws in Uganda.

interest ofdefense, public safety, public

order, public morality, or public health;

The compulsory taking of possession or acquisition of property is made under a law that makes provision for prompt payment of fair and adequate compensation, before the taking of possession or acquisition of the property; and a right of access to a court of law by any person who has an interest or right over the property.

Lastly, the constitution provides for economic rights to authors or the copyright owner and states that every person in Uganda has the right to practice his or her profession and to carry on any lawful occupation, trade, or business and every worker has a right to form or join a trade union of his or her choice for the promotion and protection of his or her economic and social interests [10]. This provision means that any Ugandan has the right to gain economically from the copyrights in any works of the author.

registrations required under the relevant laws; maintaining registers, data, and records on registrations affected by the bureau, and acting as a clearing house for information and data on those registrations; and lastly to charge fees for any services performed by the bureau. The effect of this provision is that the bureau is the sole agency mandated with the registration of copyrights and neighboring rights like moral rights under the Registrar of Copyright [13].

of residence of the author; created by a person who is a national of or resident in a country referred to in section 81 of the Act or; first published in a country referred to in section 81 of the Act [147]. The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act provides for protection to any author of any work by stating that an author of any work has a right to

protect, where the work is original and is reduced to material form in whatever method irrespective of the quality of the work or the purpose for which it is created [14]. This provision also laid down originality as a requirement for eligibility of protection of any works. For any work to be considered original it must be the product of the independent efforts of the author [15]. The court in CBS Records v Gross [16] stated that a cover version of a song can be the original work itself capable of copyright protection. The case therefore extended protection to cover versions of songs since most of them were originally crafted differently based on existing song ideas. When it comes to employed authors and works for Government or international bodies the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act[14], provides that where a person creates a work in the course of employment by another person; or on commission by another person or body in the absence of a contract to the contrary, the copyright in respect of that work shall vest in the employer or the person or body that commissioned the work. But where a person creates work under the direction or control of the Government or a prescribed international body, unless agreed otherwise, the copyright in respect of that work shall vest in the Government or international body and the moral lights in the works under both instances above is always vested in the actual author of the work [14]. The court in Kakoma v AG [17] opined that as a general rule, copyright in a commissioned work belongs to the author, in the absence of an express or implied term to the contrary. This means that if an author is employed under a contract to come up with a work like George William Kakoma was contracted by the Uganda government to come up with the national anthem of Uganda, the copyright in the work belongs to the employer and if there is no express or implied term in the contract conferring such copyright ownership, the copy1ight belongs to the author.

Of Importance is what works are protected by the Copyright and Neighbouring Rights Act, and it should be noted first and foremost that the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [14], does not protect ideas, concepts, procedures, methods, or other things of a similar nature. In court Zeccola v Universal City Studios Inc [16] the court stated that there is no copyright in the idea of a theme, but there may be a time when a combination of events and characters reaches sufficient complexity to give rise to dramatic work copyright. However, when it comes to works that are eligible for copyright, the Act provides that it protects the following literary, scientific, and artistic works that are eligible for copyright;

a) articles, books, pamphlets, lectures,

addresses, and other works of a similar nature:

- b) dramatic, dramatic-musical, and musical works;
- c) audio-visual works and sound recording, including cinematographic works and other works of a similar nature;
- d) choreographic works and pantomimes;
- e) computer programs and electronic data banks and other accompanying materials;
- t) works of drawing, painting, photography, typography, mosaic, architecture, sculpture, engraving, lithography, and tapestry; Court in the case of Burrow-Giles Lithographic Co. v Sarony [18] extended copyright protection for photography
- g) works of applied art, whether handicraft or produced on an industrial scale, and works of all types of designing;
- h) illustrations, maps, plans, sketches, and three-dimensional works relative to geography, topography, architecture, or science;
- i) derivative work which by selection and arrangement of its content, constitutes original work;
- 'j) a n d any other work in the field of literature, traditional folklore, and knowledge, science, and art in whatever manner delivered, known, or to be known in the future.

When it comes to Derivative works such as translations, adaptations, and other transformations of pre-existing works provided under section 5(1) of the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act and collections of pre-existing works like encyclopedias and anthologies which by selection and arrangement of their contents constitute original works, the Act provides for their protection as original works [14]. However, the protection of a derivative work doesn't in any way affect the protection of pre-existing work used by a person for derivation purposes.

Also, when it comes to what else is protected under the Act, it provides that public benefit works are not protected by stating that the right to protection of copyright under the Act shall not extend to the following works;

> 'a) an enactment including an Act, Statute, Decree, statutory instruments or other law made by the Legislature or

- other authorized body;
- b) decree, order, or other decision by a court of law for the administration of justice and any official translations from them;
- a report made by a committee or commission of inquiry appointed by Government or any agency of Government;
- d) News of the day namely reports of fresh events or current information by the media whether published in a written form, broadcast, internet, or communicated to the public by any other means.

The position that public benefit works are not copyright protected was confirmed by the court in Shostakovich v Twentieth Century-Fox Film Corp [19] stated that there are no moral rights in public domain works. The rationale for this is that if such works are copyrighted it would be the purpose of the works for example statutes which are meant to regulate public order and have to be easily accessed by the masses. Still, under protection, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act, provides for reciprocal protection by stating that copyright neighboring-rights owner who is not a citizen or resident of Uganda shall be protected under the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act, only if the work was first published in a country that is a member of the World Intellectual Property Organisation (WIPO), the Africa Region Intellectual Property Organisation (ARIPO), the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organisation (UNESCO) and the World Trade Organization. Or a signatory to the Trade-Related Aspects of Intellectual Property Rights Agreement (TRIPS Agreement). The court in the case of Uganda Performing Rights Society Vs. MTN (U)[20] stated that the existence of a contract of reciprocal representation between the Performance Rights Society of (UK PRS. (UK)) and Uganda Performing Rights Society was the basis upon which Uganda Performing Rights Society (UPRS) instituted a case of copyright infringement against MTN Uganda when it held a UB40 concert in Kampala on the 23rd of February 2008 and failed to pay performance royalties to UPRS was collecting on behalf of PRS (UK) as the agreement. The case showed the role including the collection of royalties on behalf of its importance to the case was their ability to enter into reciprocal collection agreements with similar agencies in different countries and collect royalties on before of these agencies for the members of these agencies [21].

The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [14], like first and foremost economic rights and

the Act provides that the owner of a protected work shall have, concerning that work, the exclusive right to do or authorize other persons to do the following

- a) to publish, produce, or reproduce the work;
- to distribute or make available to the public the original or copies of the work through saleor other means of transfer of ownership;
- c) to perform the work in public;
- d) to broadcast the work;
- 'e) to communicate the work to the public by wire or wireless means or through any known means or means to be known in the future, including making the work available to the public through the internet or in such a way that members of the public may access the work from a place and at a time individually chosen by them;
- f) where the work is a pre-existing work, to make a derivative work;
- g) to commercially rent or sell the original or copies of the work;
- h) to do, concerning that work, any act known or to be known in the future;
- to reproduce transcription into braille which is accessible to blind persons.

it comes to co-authored works, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [14], provides for a co-author's right by stating that where a work is created by more than one person and no particular part of the work is identified to have been made by each person, such that the work is indistinguishable, all the authors shall be coowners of the economic rights and the moral rights relating to that work and the co-owners shall have equal rights in that work. The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [14] provides for a duration of copyright protection under several categories hence it states that when it comes to the economic rights of an author concerning any work, the work is protected during the life of the author and fifty years after the death of the author whereas when it comes to the economic rights of the author where the work is as a result of joint authorship, the duration of protection of such a work is protected during the life of the last surviving author and fifty years after the death of the last surviving author. Where the work is owned by a corporation or other body, the duration of protection of the economic rightsin such a work, the term of protection is fifty years from the date of the first publication of the work and where the work is published anonymously or under a pseudonym, the duration of protection of the economic rights of the author are protected

for a term of fifty years from the date of its first publication; but where before the expiration of the fifty years the identity of the author is known or is no longer in doubt the economic right shall be protected during the lifetime of the author and fifty years after the death of that author [147].

In the case of audio-visual work, sound recording, or broadcast, the Act provides that the duration of protection the economic rights of an author for such works are protected until the expiration of fifty years commencing from the date of making the work or from the date the work is made available to the public with the consent of the author and when it comes to the duration of protection of a computer program the economic right of the author are protected for fifty years from the date of making the program available to the public. Lastly, when it comes to the duration of protection of photographic work, the economic rights of the author are protected for fifty years from the date of making the work [14]. Finally, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act. provides the duration of protection of the moral rights of an author shall exist in perpetuity whether the economic rights are still protected or not and that moral light are enforceable by the author orafter thedeath of his or her successors. The Act[14] also makes provision for assignment of license or transfer of copyright by stating that the owner of a copyright may as if the copyright were movable property;

- a) assign his or her economic rights in a copyright to another person;
- . b) license another person to use the economic rights in copyright;
- c) transfer to another person or bequeath the economic rights in copyright in whole or in parts;
- d) Transfer to any Braille production unit in Uganda the economic rights in the Brailletranslation.

However, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act[14], provides that the assignment, license, or transfer of the economic rights referred to above, in whole or in part does not include or imply the assignment, license, or transfer of the moral right. The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act, makes it a requirement that an assignment or transfer of the economic right stated above must be in writing and signed by the owner of the right or by the owner's agent and by the person to whom the rights are being assigned or transferred 73 and this assignment or transfer of the economic right is only limited to the use, period and country provided in the contract, but when for a license to do an act falling within copyright this may be oral, written or inferred from conduct

circumstances [14].

The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act provides that any users of works have to apply for a license and it states that any person who wishes to use or perform another person's work or who causes work to be performed in public for gain has to apply to the owner or the owner's agent for a license to do so. Upon such application being made the owner or agent may grant a license and shall in respect of any grant, charge such royalties as the owner or owner's agent may determine to be appropriate and the license granted shall be in force for one year but may be renewed each time it expires. The court in MDY Industries v Blizzard Entertainment [22] while addressing the issue of whether certain unlicensed acts are copyright infringement or merely violations of contract that for a software licensee's violation of a contract to constitute copyright infringement, there must be a nexus between the license condition and the licensor's exclusive rights of copyright. The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [14], provides for the fair use of works protected by copyright as an exception to copyright infringement. To understand the concept of fair use, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act, states that the fair use of a protected work in its original language or a translation is not an infringement of the right of the author and does not require the consent of the owner of the copyright where;

-) the production, translation, adaptation, arrangement, or other transformation of the work is for private personal use only;
- b) a quotation from a published work is used in another work, including a quotation from anewspaper or periodical in the form of a press summary, where
 - the quotation is compatible with fair practice; and
 - the extent of the quotation does not exceed what is justified for the work in which the quotation is used, and acknowledgment is given to the work from which the quotation is made;
- c) a published work is used for teaching purposes to the extent justified for the purpose by way of illustration in a publication, broadcast or sound or visual recording in so far as the use is compatible with fair practice and acknowledgment is given to the work and the author;
- d) the work is communicated to the public for teaching purposes for schools, colleges, universities, or other educational institutions or professional

training or public education in so far as the use is compatible with fair practice and acknowledgment is given to the work and the author;

- e) the work is reproduced, broadcast, or communicated to the public with acknowledgment of the work, in an article printed in a newspaper, periodical, or work broadcast on the economic, social, political, or religious topic unless the article or work expressly prohibits its reproduction, broadcast or communication to the public;
- f) any work that can be seen or heard is reproduced or communicated to the public employing photograph, audio-visual work, or broadcast to the extent justified for the purpose when reporting on current events;
- g) any work of art or architecture in a photograph or an audio-visual or television broadcast is reproduced and communicated to the public where the work is permanently located in a public place or is included by way of background or is otherwise incidental to the main object represented in the photograph or audio-visual work or television broadcast;
- h) For current information, a reproduction in the press, broadcast, or communication to thepublic is made to:
 - i. a political speech or a speech delivered during any judicial proceeding; or
 - an address, lecture, sermon, or other work of a similar nature delivered in public;
- i) For a judicial proceeding, work is reproduced;
- j) Subject to conditions prescribed by the Minister, a reproduction of a literary, ailistic or scientific work by a public library, a non-commercial documentation center, a scientific institution, or an educational institute if the reproduction and the copies made-
 - i. do not conflict with the normal exploitation of the work reproduced;
 - do not unreasonably affect the right of the author in the work; and
- k) Any work is transcribed into braille or sign language for the educational purpose of personswith disabilities.

In connection to the above, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act lies down several factors used in determining whether the use made of a work in any particular case is fair. The factors include the following;

- a) The purpose and character of the use, including whether the use is commercial as elaborated by the court in Sony Corp. of America v Universal City Studios, Inc [23] where it was observed that non-commercial recording of programs for time-shifting purposes is fair use or is for non-profit educational purposes like in the reasoning of the court in Williams & Wilkins Co. v United States [24] held that Libraries photocopying for research was fair use;
- b) the nature of the protected work;
- c) The amount and substantiality of the portion used concerning the protected work as a whole substantial similarity is required for copyright infringement to occur as stated in the case of Computer Associates Int. Inc v Altai Inc [25], that for anyone claiming infringement they have to prove that a substantial portion of the protected work was used by the infringer, and
- d) The effect of the use upon the potential market for the value of the protected work.

The other important provisions under the Act are the provisions relating to the administration of copyright and the Act first and foremost provides that the minister for justice may on the recommendation of the board of the Uganda Registration Services Bureau appoint a Registrar of Copyright [26] whose functions include;

- (a) process applications for licenses to be issued by the Minister under section 17 of the Act;
- b) register works and productions to be registered under the Act;
- c) register collecting societies;
- d) give guidance to and discipline collecting societies;
- e) register assignments, licenses, and transfers of copyrights;
- f) register copyright contracts relating to the exploitation of copyrights;
- g) provide copyright and neighboring rights information service to the public and users of copyright works;
- h) in collaboration with the collecting societies, advise Government, on matters relating tocopyright and neighboring rights;

Secondly, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [26] provides for registration of the different rights under the Act and it states that the owner of a copyright or a neighboring right may register the

right with the Registrar to keep evidence of ownership of the right; identification of works and authors; and maintenance of record of the rights. For any holder of an assignment, the Acts states that the license or transfer of copyright or neighboring right may register the assignment, license, or transfer with the Registrar to keep evidence of the assignment, license, or transfer of the copyright; maintenance of record of the rights; and publication of the assignment, license or transfer [27]. The other provision on registration of rights is that any person entering into 'a copyright or neighboring right contract may register the rights in the contract. However, per the holding of the court in Reed Elsevier Inc. v Muchnick [28] court noted that failure to register a copyright does not limit the court's jurisdiction over claims of infringement regarding unregistered works. This means that non-registration of a copyright does not affect the protection it is accorded.

The Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [26] laid down what amounts to infringement of copyright by stating that infringement of copyright or neighboring right occurs where, without a valid transfer, license, assignment, or other authorization a person deals with any work or performance contrary to the permitted free-to-use and in particular where that person does or causes or permits another person to reproduce, fix, duplicate, extract, imitate or import into Uganda otherwise than for his or her private use; to distribute in Uganda by way of sale, hire, rental or like manner; or to exhibit to the public for commercial purposes by way of broadcast, public performance or otherwise. While determining infringement court in the case of Twentieth Century Music Corp v Aiken [29] held that playing a radio broadcast of a copyrighted work at a business was not copyright infringement. Further Radio reception does not constitute a performance of copyrighted material. In cases of copyright infringement, the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act[26] provides for several remedies. First are the civil remedies and the Act states that any person whose: rights are in imminent danger of being infringed or are being infringed may institute civil proceedings in the commercial court for an injunction to prevent the infringement or to prohibit the continuation of the infringement but the grant of such an injunction does not affect the author's claim for damages in respect of loss sustained by him or her as a result of the infringement of the rights. The second civil remedy provided for under the Act is seen under the provision that upon an ex-party application by a right owner, the court may in chambers make an

Uganda's copyright legal regime is not elaborate

order for the inspection of or removal from the infringing person's premises, of the copyrightinfringing materials which constitute evidence of infringement by that person [26]. The last civil remedy under the Act is seen under the provision that a person who sustains any damage because of the infringement of his or her rights may claim damages against the person responsible for the infringement whether or not that person has been successfully prosecuted. In the case of F.W. Woolworth Co. v Contemporary Arts, Inc [30], the court stated that judges had wide latitude when determining legal remedies based on the facts of the case. This means that in cases of copyright infringement judges have wide discretion when it comes to the remedies most especially when it comes to awarding general damages. The second set of remedies in case of infringement of copyright available for a copyright owner and criminal and the Act states that a person who, without the authorization for a license from the rights owner or his or her agent publishes, distributes or reproduces the work; performs the the work in public; broadcasts communicates the work to the public; or imports any work and uses it in a manner which, were it work made in Uganda, would constitute an infringement of copyright; commits an offense and is liable on conviction, to a fine not exceeding two million shillings or imprisonment not exceeding four years or both[31]. The other important provision under the Copyrights and Neighboring Rights Act [26] is the provision concerning collecting societies, therefore the Act makes it a requirement when it provides that no collecting society can operate in Uganda without a registration cellificate issued by the Registrar of Companies, hence making it an offense to operate a collecting society with without a registration certificate. Similarly, under the Act, the registrar is mandated not to register any other society in respect of the same bundle of rights and category of works if there exists another society that has already been licensed and functions to the satisfaction of its members. The importance of collecting societies was well elaborated in the case of Uganda Performing Rights Society Vs. MTN (U) [20] where the court noted that the reason why individual copyright owners assign their rights to collecting societies is that individual copyright owners can't monitor the performance of their works whether in the UK or elsewhere as well as collect royalties hence they assign their rights to collecting societies that have the resources to enforce them on their behalf.

CONCLUSION

enough and there is limited knowledge of its

existence when it comes to authors of works in Lack of proper enforcement of the Uganda. existing laws is equally what has backtracked the protection of works resulting in widespread infringement and abuse of such copyright-protected works under the guise of fair use. In this light, the study calls for an upgrade of technology to be done to help collecting societies execute the mandate efficiently because copyright infringement today involves the use of computers and technology especially with the widespread internet all over the country where many people access copyrighted content illegally like music online but where there is developed software to monitor such illegal activities, this would reduce copyright infringement. It is also the researcher's recommendation that cooperating collective management societies should

be established to enable cooperation between copyright owners and consumers of such content and a result to support such copyright owners in monitoring where and how much content is used. This reduces the illegal reproduction of copyrightprotected content. More so, the researcher also recommend that the various stakeholders should focus on capacity building in terms of training staff in the different institutions charged with the enforcement of copyright. Most especially those who are at the frontline of enforcement for example the police and staff of the different collecting societies. Lastly, its researcher recommends that there is a need for the establishment of an enforcement body specifically to handle and enforce copyright infringement Uganda. in

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