

Remix Culture in the Land of the Canucks

(Article by Sarah Nicholson, Alan Chorney, and Danielle Hubbard)

While interested teens at your library should be made aware of copyright law, Creative Commons licensing, and the rights of the creator, they should also have the opportunity to learn about the people who are fighting to make remixing a more acceptable and celebrated practice. An introduction to these key figures – especially key Canucks! – could be inspirational, stirring a desire in young people to go out and actively fight for remixers (or whomever/whatever else they believe in), to find their voice, and reach for the stars.

It's no news that Canada's rich cultural landscape has fostered the growth of many great artistic talents. Featuring impressive heavy-hitters such as the Magnificent Seven, Bryan Adams, and Margaret Atwood, the country's list of famous creators is seemingly endless. With such a supportive creative environment, it will perhaps be no surprise that many Canadians, and teens in particular, have embraced remix culture.

Many Canadians have also taken up the legal fight to support remix culture. This article will highlight two such figures.

Currently working as a Professor of Law at Vanderbilt Law School, Daniel Gervais has spent the past ten years studying Canadian and international copyright and intellectual property law (SelectedWorks, n.d.). In an interview featured on the CBC podcast *Spark*, Gervais provided commentary about the legal implications of remix culture during a discussion about fan fiction. "The

average person really didn't have anything to do with copyright for most of the 300 years or so we've had copyright law and it's really only since about 1995 that people have been told to be careful when copying things and exchanging things via e-mail and otherwise," he explains, noting: "Remix culture really challenges what it means to be an author, and I think that's the most interesting concept because authorship is really at the core, at the centre of our copyright system." (Hoffman, Misener, Parise, Young & Gervais, 2007).

Gervais contends that copying should not break copyright laws unless it results in the original creator suffering financial loss or a lack of attribution. "What creators want is to be identified as the author of their work and the law does protect that and allows them to enforce it and then leave everyone else free to create, innovate, and come up with what's probably going to be called main culture in a few years" (Hoffman, Misener, Parise, Young & Gervais, 2007).

An even more prominent Canadian superstar in the fight for remix culture is Toronto-born YA author Cory Doctorow (craphound.com). Currently residing in Britain, Doctorow was the first person to publish a novel under a Creative Commons license – *Down and Out in the Magic Kingdom*, way back in 2003. Since then Doctorow has gone on to publish a slew of YA novels (among other works), each and every one under a Creative Commons license. His latest novel,



Homeland, is the sequel to the award-winning 2008 novel, *Little Brother*.

The CC licensing of Doctorow's work can be seen as a reflection of his belief that current copyright laws infringe on the rights of consumers and are stifling to the creativity of society. Doctorow is an outspoken supporter for the liberalization of

We had the opportunity to correspond with Cory Doctorow in March of 2013, which resulted in a lively discussion about the future of libraries, mashups, early childhood psychology, and the creative process. We emailed our questions to Doctorow; he responded in an audio file, transcribed below. Rather than speaking further



copyright law and is strongly against Digital Rights Management.

about Canadian champions of teen remix culture, we will let Cory Doctorow speak for himself.