

Review

PhD thesis

**title: Prawo autorskie dla projektantów
(Copyright law for designers)**

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Subject

Copyright law as the protection of creative act and copyright ownership of the individuals in the field of visual communication has been on the edge of interest from early 90s to recent past. The appearance of attractiveness was caused perhaps only by medialized trials of big corporations and advertising houses. First version of Copyright law that appears in hands of young designer (me) has form of thirty pages of text set in simple text editor software by Times New Roman. By holding this block of papers made as eight copy from the xerox machine I became an “happy owner” of law design by state of law.

Printed version of the Copyright Law didn't mean automatically understanding of the problem for the starting designer and neither nor ability of contextuality and connectivity of individual parts of law with specific and tangible situation that will may supervene in professional life. Thankfully my practice life almost never brought me into the situation with my clients that would need legal grasp of it but...

... with the benefit of hindsight of over twenty years me as a designer I am asking myself the same questions as on beginning of my career:

1. What is the possibility of graphic designer to assist better accessibility of the Copyright law and its better readability?
2. Particularly what is the possibility of graphic designer to contribute on more understandable interpretation and mainly understanding of Copyright law by designers themselves?
3. Am I able to find answers to my questions about Copyright law without calling my lawyer every minute?

Book of Agata Korzeńska and collective helped me to answer them all.

To whom

Decisive starting point of designer to reach succesful result of assessed PhD thesis was rigorous, clear and exact selection of target group. To whom is designated the handbook of Copyright law. Pinpoint selection of target group (by critical reduction of other creative disciplines) — very precise orientation to graphic designer in our

case allowed the designer of the handbook to shift even more surgically preciseness to final formulation of to whom exactly is she designing. Thanks to this she could fragmented relative broad description of term “graphic designer” into a specific segment of freelancer. Consistent and critical formulation built strong ground to following steps of the handbook (communication language — type of language, adjustment of contextuality in the texts and selection of case studies). All this decisions were crucial and highly demanded.

Editor

Following decisive point of Mrs. Agata Korzeńska was thoughtful choice of co-authors compound mainly from lawyers (Weronika Bednarska, Maryla Bywalec, Anna Golan a Żaneta Lerche—Górecka) and the designer itself taking responsibility not “only” for design but also for editorial work and “tester” of handbook user. I have neither no knowledge about the team background, atmosphere of collaboration and precise rules of their collaboration, by submitted PhD thesis I assume that designer had ability to highly motivate collective and to build background for searching of contemporary (designers) language - written or visual — to find accurate way to interpret such exact body matter as Copyright law certainly is. I will write about it more in following text. Editor role of designer is advanced up—grade of autorship set-up. This up—grade allowed to create valuable text material lean on contemporary law interpretation using informal language but without loosign disquisitionality and circumstantiality of original interpretation.

Interdisciplinary processes running between designer and lawyers didn't hide the conspicuity of of designers editorial role. I suppose.

Language

Bravery and capabilities of collective of authors in stylization of explanatory — communication language (and I hope I am not wrong) without injuring exactness and quality of Copyright law interpretation. At this point the author (designer) of the handbook proved ability of target group formulation and ability of methods of thinking and processes of graphic designer towards co-authors (lawyers). Informal text performance has certainly capacity to crush all the fears and excessive respect (resulting from misunderstanding) of law interpretations related to intellectual property. Authors bravery to get down to — frankly speaking — unconventional forms of interpretation is bringing risk of “policing” the borders of such kind of communication channel. Type of language (channel of communication) is one of the strenght of submitted work but patchily I had some discomfort of feeling that “someone” is trying to get to close to my comfort zone. Maybe I am to conservative (or not exactly the cardinal generation of target) but in such important text I am searching more good adviser than new buddy.

Text — contextuality — manipulation

Systematical work and undoubtedly rich professional experiences of PhD student (experienced designer), recency and acuteness of the topic leads me in writing my opinion. Selection and accurate formulation of target group, set-up of collective of authors, language selection, re-formulation of legal text and mainly consistency of such sequence of moves created environment for following work text—(manipulation) and text-(organization). I lay on importance that I did read the handbook first and then later I confront it with the explanation brochure about typesetting, layout and content manipulation that designer broadly describes: Dokumentacja projektu, part szukanie rozwiązań (p. 40–44), prototypowanie (p. 46–49), layout (p. 50–68). I would like to emphasize the fact that designer demonstrated absolutely ability and knowledge of designing and adaptating very complicated and comprehensive text including portion of experiment but without imperilment of usability of text (information). Strong side of designer concept I consider 4 elements divisioning: text główny — marginalia — pytania z odpowiedzią i przykłady. I believe that decent research and designer contribution (knowledge of thinking and designers reading) was good preparation.

I would like to be now less formal: PhD student accurately — in advance — analyzed moments when me as reader of main text might have particular question — preformulated by designer included answer and visual example of the problem (situation). Simply, handbook of Agata Korzeńska is publication of anticipated question and its skilled answers in total ergonomical layoute, when eye and mind of the reader are organized and controled by designer.

Consequent

If we consider that publication is comprehensive output (product) of designer that along goes clear and absolute control over the content and form and its consequent replenishment (and there is no doubts about it) brings along certain risks and dangers (in such type of concept) express in subminted work. Creating (building) of “absolute” system of designer adaptation missing freer margins of ingress to specific (non-reccuring) information designer is launching hermetical system that might become to be trap of it and might distract attention on 224 pages of reading text.

I will try to be more specific. If the elementary contextuality of contentual elements built on four elemental components: text główny — marginalia — pytania z odpowiedzią i przykłady; works up to moment when one or more of the elements is/are missing. This situation is building micro-gaps weaken smartly set dynamics of logical layout of the content. Sporadically while reading longer passages of main text (excluded other components) I was loosing feeling of assurances of control of designer over my reading and understanding of text.

Absence of contextuality in second part of the chapter w teorii has (as reader—designer) annoyed me and adjusted flow of the publication from its beginning is

weaken in sequence. It doesn't have to mean that contextuality has to be "in full blast" from the first page till the last one but I believe that it would make sense to think about it and possibly finding alternate solutions especially in "glazed" parts of the text. ... if designer consider that "table-illustration" is something instead (e.g. p. 56, 60 or 69) I would articulate my doubts. Stylized table as nivelized block was not in my point of view more persuasive than information described in textual form. The tables are (I would say) counter-productive space consuming component of the publication. Working more with other techniques of context (e.g. underlining, headlining connected with marginal references — e.g. p.91) would be more efficient.

Contradiction

As I mention above the presented work is dispose with extraordinary readable text (even maybe to much proximate) and along (almost) perfect system of adaptation of the content into each component of publication layout, rich structure of work and specially consequent entry of designer. But paradoxically both of this highest qualities (contentual and formal) appers sporadically as two incompatible worlds. I don't formulate it as a mistake but more environment for wider thinking and discussing about how much we let to operate ourselves by our own rules, methods and processes and at the same time we would like to create inovative and nontypical outputs of our work. Maybe and without respecting our academic and professional skills and experiences, we should let space for little moments of surprise in our work and radical positions and design variability.

"Blessing"

My role in this "game" is not to be to critical (no matter what) and I don't want to usurp the competency to judge necessarily the performance of the PhD student. My view is more about trasposition of designer into the role of reader of the texts-texts that are missing in our (Central European) market. I highly valuate the bravery of Mrs. Korzeńska to jump in such demanding project as well as her endurance and power to resist scope of undiscovered possibilities of Copyright law adaptation by clearly designed rules and in maximum possible scale of its fill in here handbook. I highly valuate the collective of layers cooperating on this project and their "appetite" to work on innovative ways of interpretation of law by using non-exerted patterns and stereotypical solutions.

Submitted work in many aspects verifies and in many exceeds criteria of final PhD project. I suggest the committee to accept the submitted work and valuate Mrs. Agata Korzeńska degree PhD.

At the end of my opinion I would like to quote Mrs. Agata:

Nie chciałam aby mój projekt był czysto akademicki, od początku założyłam, że zostanie wdrożony. Z tego powodu, przed podjęciem wszelkich działań, i badawczych, i projektowych, podjęłam współpracę z kancelaria prawną So In Law oraz

wydawnictwem Od.Nowa, z którym współpracuję z sukcesami o wielu lat, a które specjalizuje się w publikacji książek o tematyce prawniczej... (str. 5)

Keep fingers crossed!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, consisting of a vertical line on the left, a horizontal line crossing it, and a large loop on the right.

Assoc. Prof. Marcel Benčík, MFA, PhD
reviewer
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