Review of Economic Research on Copyright Issues, 2024, vol. 21, pp. 1-6

A TWENTY-ONE YEAR REPORT OF PUBLISHING IN RERCI

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Abstract. This article is a stock-take of the first 21 years of RERCI's publishing history. It provides a holistic picture of the history of the journal since it was launched in 2004, and up to the end of 2024. All of the articles published in RERCI are freely downloadable by any interested reader as pdf files from the SERCI website (see http://www.serci.org/rerci.php).

1. Introduction

The journal *The Review of Economic Research on Copyright Issues*, or RERCI for short, was launched in 2004 as the principle publishing outlet for articles dealing with any issues related to copyright and applying or critically engaging with economic analysis or related empirical methods.[1] The journal is owned and managed by the *Society for Economic Research on Copyright Issues* (SERCI for short), and is designed to be a neutral platform of debate among economists and any other academic writing on the issue of copyright from an economic perspective. As such, it is a "niche" journal, and publishes far fewer articles than other more general journals. For the same reason, the articles published in RERCI are to be expected to generate fewer cites than a general topic journal. However, that said, as I will show in this report, the papers that have appeared in RERCI over the first 21 years of operation have indeed had some serious impact, both from scholarly academics and other related professionals, and have been noticed by readers across the globe.

[1]Economic analysis is fairly loosely defined. Some articles are squarely based on economic theory, others are more on the periphery. The underlying idea is that, in order to be relevant for RERCI, an article should provide an analysis and treatment of some topic that is relevant to the concept of copyright and/or its effects, in such a way that the discussion is of interest to economists.

2. Some statistics on the visibility and impact of RERCI articles

Since 2004, RERCI has published 142 articles.[2] This represents an average number of publications of 6.8 articles per-year. Initially, the journal was published in 2 issues per-year, however, the general trend over the past decade is for a single issue per-year, normally containing between 3 and 6 papers. The acceptance rate is very difficult to determine, and fluctuates widely from year to year. However, I estimate that for every article that ends up published, at least 4 are rejected. Most of the outright rejections, though, are desk-rejected as not being relevant for the journal topical content. The general philosophy that the Managing Editor of the journal has maintained for articles that get past the desk, is to set to work with the author(s) to improve the paper until it is acceptable for inclusion in the journal. Only on very few occasions has a revise and resubmit decision not ended up with a published article.

The journal has been indexed with EconLit and other international journal indexing organisations since its inception. However, in 2021 RERCI began to be indexed in Scopus, and so was included in the companion ranking Scimago. Scopus is the leading organisation for academic journal indexing in the world. The coverage that Scopus uses for RERCI is only for articles published from 2019 to the present (a current total of only 16 articles to date, or just over 11% of all of RERCI's papers). Given that those are the most recently published articles, unsurprisingly they are in general not yet among the most noticed of the articles published in RERCI, where "noticed" is indicated by citations, or downloads, for example. This has led to a current Scimago ranking of Q4, and a low current H-index. However, searching Scopus for articles in the Scopus database that mention either "The Review of Economic Research on Copyright Issues" or "RERCI" in their references delivers 448 hits. These are all articles in the Scopus set of indexed journals, excluding RERCI itself, that cite articles published in RERCI for the entire life of the journal (i.e. since 2004). That is, self-cites in RERCI to earlier RERCI articles are excluded. Of those 448 citing articles, 18 are articles that were published in 2024, and the earliest is from 2005

[2]All of the statistics offered here were gathered on December 28th, 2024. Some of the information, such as the download data mentioned below, is added to daily.

– one year after RERCI was launched. Given that over the same time period, 2004-2024, RERCI has published 142 articles, the true average Scopus cites per-article (aggregate impact factor) published in RERCI is $448/142 = 3.1549$.[3]

Since 2023, RERCI has also been indexed in the Hein Online database, making our articles more visible to law scholars the world over.

Turning to Google Scholar, imputting as a search criteria the short-form used by Hein Online to identify the journal, which is "Rev Econ Rsch Copyright Issues", generated 14 pages of results, containing 116 articles published in RERCI with at least one cite.[4] The total cite count for those 116 articles is 2350, for an average per-paper of 20.26 cites (over the full set of 142 published articles, the average Google cites per-article is 16.55). By listing the 116 articles with at least 1 cite in order of their number of cites, there are 25 articles with at least 25 cites, giving RERCI a Google Scholar H-index of at least 25.[5]

Finally, since 2018, which is when the SERCI website underwent a significant upgrade, there has been a download count on each published article that has appeared in the journal. As of 28 December 2024, the total number of downloads stands at 237,476. The average number of downloads per-article is 1672.4, and the median is 1186. Rather impressively, 82.4% (that is 117 articles) of the 142 articles published to date have been downloaded at least 1000 times.

Aside from its academic audience, the journal has been a valuable resource for professionals working in the field of copyright, particularly in the legal and policy fields. As an example of this, in its 2018 initial determination in the Phonorecords III hearing, the US Copyright Royalty Board cited the article by William Johnson (2005) from RERCI. That same article, as well as Watt (2010) was cited in Judge Strickler's dissent from the majority ruling in that same proceeding. Also, The World Intellectual Property Organization has also consulted and cited articles from RERCI in their work on guidebooks for measuring

[3]This is an aggregate impact factor, calculated over the entire life of the journal, rather than one that is restricted to only the past few years.

[4]Of course, Google Scholar is a much coarser source of citation information, and includes many cites that Scopus ignores.

[5]I say "at least", because it is feasible that there exist other cites are for "RERCI" rather than for the Hein indicator.

the economic contribution of the copyright industries (see, for example, the 2015 revised edition, which cites Watt (2006)).

While RERCI maintains an open invitation for submissions, many of the articles that have appeared in RERCI were presented at the Annual Congresses of SERCI over the years. In particular, almost all of the keynote speakers at each of those congresses have published their talks in the journal. The list of the authors is rather impressive.[6] They are the following:

(1) 2004, Paul David, "The End of Copyright History?", RERCI 1(2); 5-10.
(2) 2005, William Baumol, "Intellectual Property: How the right to keep it to yourself can facilitate dissemination", RERCI 2(2); 17-23.
(3) 2006, Ivan Png, "Copyright: A plea for empirical research", RERCI 3(2); 3-13.
(4) 2007, Richard Lipsey, "Technological Transformation, Intellectual Property Rights and Second Best Theory", RERCI 4(2); 5-28.
(5) 2008, Frederick M. Scherer, "The Emergence of Musical Copyright in Europe 1709 to 1850", RERCI 5(2); 3-18.
(6) 2009, Harold Demsetz, "Creativity and the Economics of the Copyright Controversy", RERCI 6(2); 5-12.
(7) 2010, Joel Waldfogel, "The Four P's of Digital Distribution in the Internet Era: Piracy, pie-splitting and pipe control", RERCI 7(2); 3-20.
(8) 2011, Nancy Gallini, "Competition Policy, Patent Pools and Copyright Collectives", RERCI 8(2); 3-34.
(9) 2012, Wendy Gordon, "Dissemination Must Serve Authors: How the US Supreme Court erred", RERCI 10(1); 1-19.
(10) 2013, Michael Waldman, "Piracy of Intellectual Property: Past, present and future", RERCI 10(2); 1-26.

[6]The list only contains keynote talks that were included in RERCI. The keynote speaker at the very first SERCI Congress, held in 2002 was Stan Liebowitz, and in 2003 the keynote was delivered by Pamela Samuelson. Their papers appeared in edited books published by Edward Elgar. In 2017, there were two keynote talks. The second was delivered by Francisco Parisi, but for personal reasons it was not submitted to RERCI. There was no SERCI Annual Congress during the pandemic years of 2020 and 2021.

(11) 2014, David Perez and Ines Macho, "Copyright Licensing Under Asymmetric Information", RERCI 11(2); 1-26.

(12) 2015, Judge David Strickler, "Royalty Rate Setting for Sound Recordings by the United States Copyright Royalty Board: The judicial need for independent scholarly economic analysis", RERCI 12(1/2); 1-15.

(13) 2016, Paul Belleflamme, "The Economics of Digital Goods: A progress report", RERCI 13(2); 1-24.

(14) 2017, Brett Frischmann, "Capabilities, Spillovers, and Intellectual Progress: Towards a human flourishing theory of intellectual property", RERCI 14(1/2); 1-38.

(15) 2018, Joshua Gans, "Getting Pricing Right on Digital Music Copyright", RERCI 15(2); 1-22.

(16) 2019, Zorina Khan, "Accounting for Creativity: Lessons from the economic history of intellectual property and innovation", RERCI 17(1); 1-37.

(17) 2022, Peter Di Cola, "A Practical Model of Copyright Economics with Intermediaries", RERCI 19; 1-51.

(18) 2023, Abhinay Muthoo, "Some Remarks on Bargaining Power, Innovation and 21st Century Copyright Law", RERCI 20; 1-10.

(19) 2024, Keith Maskus, "Intellectual Property Rights and Knowledge Diffusion in the Global Economy", RERCI 21; 7-28.

3. Conclusion

RERCI's journey from a brand new journal in a nacient field to the present has not been without roadblocks, but by and large it has been successful. The journal is now set to continue to fulfil its mission of offering a platform of debate, where serious academic research on the economics of copyright can be disseminated free of charge to any interested reader. A major change has been implemented starting in late 2024 with the addition of a new co-managing editor – Christian Handke – who joins the incumbent – Richard Watt – in striving to publish the best and most impactful articles possible. We shall see what the future holds, but in a digital dominated world such as that in which we live, copyright

is both becoming more important and at the same time, is constantly under siege. The stage is certainly set for plenty of economic research going forward, and RERCI is well placed to be a major vehicle for dissemination of that research.

References

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Watt, R. (2010), "Fair Copyright Remuneration: The case of music radio", *Review of Economic Research on Copyright Issues*, 7(2); 21-37.

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