

Belonging as Intellectual Creation

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This project considers the question of “what we create when we create.” Certainly, one product of creation is “stuff”—inventions, trademarks, and works of authorship. But the same creative process also generates other public, personal, or social goods such as skills, self-actualization, and community. This project postulates that for some creators, a sense of belonging is a product of intellectual creation that has social value independent of the “stuff” associated with its creation. The project considers social science research establishing a sense of belonging as a fundamental human need and driver of behavior, and considers how in creative communities, a desire for a sense of belonging encourages both creation and adherence to copying and attribution norms that may differ from formal law. This refines the common narrative “stuff” as the only product of intellectual creation and calls for change in how we think about intellectual property law’s exclusivity-based incentive structure.

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