

The Componentization of Information

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It is no longer a question of whether we live in an information age; the question now is whether and how best to adapt our existing intellectual property regimes to protect the products of today's information society. Although the laws have been stretched to provide at least partial coverage for information products, there are a number of works that do not fit comfortably within the existing schemes – most notably databases, computer programs, and genetic sequence inventions. The common thread running through each of these problematic works is that information is a vital component of the whole. It is precisely because these works revolve around information that society is not prepared to stretch the law to fully protect them.

In this article, I first discuss the problems that accompany the propertization of information and examine the ways in which the current intellectual property schemes have been stretched to cover information products. I also discuss why these types of works need to be protected and why simply straining the boundaries of the current regimes is not an appropriate solution. Finally, I propose a *sui generis* protection scheme for those information products where the information is a component of the whole. The proposed scheme works with the commonalities between the seemingly diverse types of information products where the information is a component and takes the relevant concerns about information propertization into consideration.