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Using PICS for Copyright Notice and Control

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Abstract

This document presents an alternative expression mechanism for the copyright status of Web resources. Specifically it employs the Platform for Internet Content Selection (PICS) [2] label format to associate web resources with their copyright and usage information. This in turn can be used by search engines, proxy servers, agents, clients, and users for content selection or to aid in rights compliance. This document employs the copy control system described in [1].

1. Introduction

Intellectual property on the Internet has been a contentious topic for a number of reasons. These include (1) does the nature of the technology require us to change the legal status of copyright as it stands now, (2) what rights should be associated with Web content, (3) how to express the rights, and (4) should the expression of the rights be used for notification, enforcement, or payment negotiation? This

draft only addresses the expression of rights and uses the copy control method/rights found in [1]. We argue that PICS is an effective method of communicating intellectual property information about Web content.

2.1 Copyright Status and Control

How intellectual property rights should be expressed is affected by the following questions. Are the rights human readable, machine readable? Are the rights easily encoded, efficiently encoded? Does this encoding change across multiple media (ASCII, images, audio, video, etc.) where size and speed considerations may be of importance? In this draft we do not address these issues in detail, rather we use the copy control system specified in [1] and use PICS to associate the copy control information with Web content.

In [1], Daviel specified a system in which a Web document has "Print", "Save", and "Quote" variables associated with it, where ({0 = disallowed}, {1 = conditionally allowed}, {2 = unconditionally allowed}). These permissions are associated with a document by encoding them in an HTTP header, or HTML META tag. PICS is a more effective means of associating Web resources with their copyright status and control information as demonstrated in [section 2.3](#).

2.2 PICS Expression of Copyright Status and Control

Consider the case in which Mark Twain wrote the material at <http://www.twain.com/story.html> . He also has a page describing the copyright statement in fuller detail at <http://www.twain.com/IP-notice.html> . He uses the copy control system in [1] to create the following label:

```
(PICS-1.1 "http://www.wipo.org/v1.5"  
  by "Mark Twain"  
  labels on "1994.11.05T08:15-0500"  
    for "http://www.twain.com/story.html"  
    full "http://www.twain.com/IP-notice.html"  
    ratings (print 1 save 1 quote 2))
```

2.3 Benefits of Using PICS labels for Copyright Status and Control

The benefits of using PICS labels for copyright status and control include:

1. Detached labels can easily associate copyright information with any web referenceable resource including audio and visual content.
2. Multiple distribution methods (embedded within the document,

transported by the server, or distributed from a label bureau) improve copy status and control management. Organizations can control the use and access to their IPR from their server or proxy. Organizations can also create "audit" spiders to understand the distribution and use of their content on the Internet.

3. Generic labeling (implicitly rates every URL for which the specified URL is the prefix of) improves the management of the copyright information, since one doesn't have to label every document in a directory if the tree has a homogenous copyright status.
4. Capabilities for digital signatures are provided in the PICS format.
5. PICS is being widely used in other domains.

3. Security Considerations

This document does not address the integrity of intellectual property assertions, cases of unauthorized disclosure, nor enforcement mechanisms. However, PICS labels can provide the basic information that the advanced functionality operate upon.

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- [1] A. Daviel, "Copy Control for Web Documents.", Vancouver Webpages, INTERNET DRAFT, <[draft-daviel-web-copy-control-00.txt](#)>, November 1996.
- [2] PICS, "Label Syntax and Communication Protocols", INTERNET DRAFT, "[draft-pics-labels-00.txt](#)", 11/21/95.

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