

As a long-standing collector of historical recordings, I would wish to add my support to the widespread dismay aroused by the proposal to extend mechanical copyright in such a radical (and retrospective) manner.

Record companies in reality have *no interest* in reissuing most of their back catalogues -- nor, in many cases, are able to do so. Very many of the records used in reissues have to come from private collections, and the incentive and ability to preserve these artefacts is already increasingly tenuous. And where will the earliest cultural heritage be in 50 years time?

There is in particular the problem of retrospective application of the rule: at the very least, some arrangement should be made to avoid the nonsense with the 70-year rule that replaced the 50 years for author copyright -- which should have been extended via a *fixed* date for 20 years in the interim to prevent non-copyright material going back into copyright.

And what happens in 2036? Are we to expect another extension to 115 years?

This is an extremely dangerous precedent!

I can see no advantage to anyone in the long run to this ill-founded proposal, either for the record companies or for the cultural heritage that we are now trying to preserve and to study. It is difficult enough even in current circumstances; the new proposal could be quite disastrous.

There is an alternative, of course: record collectors and others interested in disseminating and preserving historical recordings will simply make their own arrangements, in defiance of the pointless dog-in-the-manger attitude that this proposal will support. The difference will be that nobody will make any money out of it...

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