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3D Printing and Beyond Seminar: Emerging IP Issues with 3D Printing and Additive Manufacturing

BY [MANAGING EDITOR](#) / ON FEBRUARY 7, 2015

The Cardozo Arts and Entertainment Law Journal hosted its Spring Symposium on Monday, February 2nd, 2015. The heavy precipitation and frigid temperatures did not stop practitioners, scholars, and students alike from coming together in impressive numbers to engage in a discussion about the intellectual property issues surrounding 3D printing.

3D printing represents one of the [most intriguing areas of technological growth in the world](#). 3D printing is a term used for various methods of additive manufacturing where successive layers of material are added to create a desired object from CAD/CAM computer files, which can also be generated using a 3D scanner. Common materials for use with 3D printers include plastics and metals, with experimentation around the world pursuing novel inputs such as microscopic electrodes, semi-conductors and [even living human cells](#). Over the last decade, [6,800 3D printing/additive manufacturing patents have been filed](#) with the United States Patent and Trademark Office.

With many early industrial 3D printing patents [having expired in the recent past](#), fights over patent rights are sure to arise in the near future. Not only will patent rights be a concern, but the widespread adoption of 3D printing will raise interesting legal questions in all areas of intellectual property, including copyright and trademarks.

After an artisanal cocktail hour courtesy of The Glenmont Group, guests were welcomed to the Jacob Burns Moot Court Room to begin the formal program of the evening. The first panel consisted of Greg Boyd from Frankfurt Kurnit, John Knapp from Solidoodle LLC, Martin Galese from Formlabs, Inc., Michael Weinberg from Public Knowledge, and Natalia Krasnodebska from Shapeways. This panel was moderated by Aaron Wright from Cardozo's newly formed Tech Startup Clinic and offered interesting perspectives on 3D printing given the diversity of the panel.

This panel highlighted the intriguing customization options available to consumers with the continued downward pressure on the price of 3D printing. Most panel members agreed that consumer applications were geared to expensive, customizable parts such as jewelry and phone cases, citing similar frustrations to the uses of the modern day printer. However, they were more excited about the advantages that 3D printing provides for industrial and design applications. Further, the panel raised interesting questions about how owners of intellectual property will respond as adoption of 3D printing expands. Will intellectual property owners turn to litigation as the music industry did with the transition of music to the computer, or will

they be more willing to come together to create the future together? Only time will tell. The group did seem in favor to the idea of increased government spending to bring 3D printing to classrooms across the country as a tool for learning the basics of science and computer design, and to encourage development of 2nd and 3rd generation applications of 3D printing.

Following the first panel was a fascinating discussion between Gianni Servodidio from Jenner & Block, Mark Bartholomew from SUNY Buffalo Law, and Katherine Strandburg from NYU Law that was moderated by Cardozo's own Prof. Felix Wu. Although each guest focused their conversation to a specific area of intellectual property, they all echoed a common theme. While consumers who use 3D printing from their homes may be directly liable under current patent, trademark and copyright laws, they are less desirable defendants in potential lawsuits. The more intriguing defendants are those who may be indirectly liable for hosting websites that allow consumers to post and download instructions to print protectable objects themselves or printing shops that offer 3D printing services as a business. Each group of potential defendants raises its own set of obstacles to being held liable under various intellectual property laws that will be fascinating to participate in and follow in the future.

As the formal discussions came to a close, attendees were welcomed to a reception in Cardozo's atrium. During the reception, attendees were treated to some exceptionally delicious kosher foods and cold refreshments, highlighted by an ice-cream sundae bar that was not to be missed! All of those involved with putting together the event graciously thank everyone who participated in the panels and attended the symposium. We look forward to seeing you at many more exciting events in the future!

CLE Materials:

[3D printing: Overcoming the legal and intellectual property issues](#)

[Is 3D printing facing its Napster moment?](#)

[Beyond Patents: 3D Printing and IP](#)