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Can Companies Protect Online Databases from Piracy? Symposium Addresses Constitutional Issues, Supreme Court to Act

University of Dayton

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NEWS RELEASE

**CAN COMPANIES PROTECT ONLINE DATABASES FROM PIRACY?
SYMPOSIUM ADDRESSES CONSTITUTIONAL ISSUES, SUPREME COURT TO ACT**

DAYTON, Ohio — Who owns what online?

That's the topic of an Oct. 4-5 symposium at the University of Dayton's School of Law that's being co-sponsored by organizations with the biggest stake in the dispute — Reed-Elsevier, Lexis-Nexis, eBay, Thomson-West and the Software & Information Industry Association.

"Most of the disputes have been about copyright issues," said Jeffrey Matsuura, assistant professor of law and director of the program in law and technology at the University of Dayton. "In an open, Democratic society, people say information ought to be accessible. On the other hand, there's an increasing amount of material that can't be copyrighted, yet the developers have the same incentive to protect it.

"It's a timely topic because the Supreme Court in the week after the conference, is scheduled to hear oral arguments on a case that challenges the ability of Congress to expand the scope of copyright protection."

In 1991, the Supreme Court ruled that facts are not copyrightable and databases, like Lexis-Nexis, are afforded only "thin" protection under the Copyright Act, according to Matsuura. "The speakers at the sessions will be talking about First Amendment and public domain issues related to efforts by groups that make money off of collecting and distributing information — such as publishers, media companies and online businesses — to limit access to their material. The sessions will look at what limits the Constitution places on the ability of

lawmakers to create and enforce rules that restrict access to databases and other collections of information.”

Leading scholars in constitutional law and copyright management will participate. A 12:15 p.m. luncheon presentation on Saturday, Oct. 5, will feature a talk by two Lexis-Nexis executives (Allan D. McLaughlin, senior vice president and chief technology officer, and Harry Silver, senior director of Lexis product management) on “Complexity and Value of Commercial Databases.”

Continuing legal education credit is available. The registration fee is \$450, and partial scholarships (\$195) are available for full-time judges, government employees and professors. UD School of Law students can register for \$20, and all other students pay \$95. All sessions will take place in Joseph E. Keller Hall. For registration information, call (937) 229-3325. The registration form can be downloaded here: <http://www.law.udayton.edu/conferences/>.

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