

On Intellectual Property III

The private property convention is meant to reduce conflict over naturally scarce resources. When something is made artificially scarce by government fiat, say when ideas are monopolizable (copyright and patent), it is as if a wrench is thrown into the works of a machine. Suddenly, property rights no longer protect an owner's exclusive right of control over their naturally scarce property. Every creator on earth now has a right of control over how everyone else's property may be used, ie. may not be configured in certain ways as to implement an idea created by someone else, somewhere else, at some other time, and whether the creator knows about it or not. It's bad enough that property rights are made less secure by government fiat in many other ways (taxation, regulation, *et cetera*), but to add insult to injury, ideas (or rather, *information*) that may be helpful for a property owner to get the most out of his or her property are now off limits as well. It's no surprise to me that so-called "intellectual property" has statist and corporatist (mercantilist) roots; all the biggest threats to property rights do. And that's today's two cents.