

On Property Rights II

The “Who had it *first?*” property rights convention solves the artificially created conflicts surrounding so-called “intellectual property” eg. copyrights and patents. Ideas only exist embedded in real, physical items, starting with our brains. Your attempt to control my brain or my property forces us to ask the question, “Who had it *first?*” My brain first belonged to me, not you. If I use my brain to think about an idea you originated, that’s really none of your business. My brain does not belong to you. If I use my mouth to sing a song you originated, with or without the exchange of money, that’s also none of your business. My mouth does not belong to you, and neither does my customer’s money. If I use my property to implement an invention you originated, that’s also none of your business. My property configured any way I please does not belong to you. The “Who had it *first?*” property rights convention is totally incompatible with a property rights convention that asks, “Who *thought about* it first?” Ideas, patterns of information, thoughts, can be used by everyone simultaneously, always embedded in real, physical items that cannot. “Who had it *first?*” is the key. And that’s today’s two cents.