

Online Publishing – Issues to Consider

One of the interesting parts of the publishing business is the relationship that is formed between publisher and author, which is formalized by a contract. With teen publishing and content on library Web sites, this takes form of the disclaimer or release on a submission Web form. These state the rules of the game and librarians approach them from a variety of points of view.

The Seven Hills Review poetry e-zine is hosted by the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County and produced “by teens, for teens”. The release that teens sign when they submit their work online says:

“I certify that the work submitted to the Seven Hills Review is mine and is completely original. I grant the Public Library of Cincinnati and Hamilton County the right to use my name, creative work and visual image in their publications, without recourse.”

<http://teenspace.cincinnati.library.org/>

The leading concerns of this release seems to be whether the work is original or not, and that the library assumes the right to use their work and reveal the author’s identity as the library sees fit. In the Seven Hills Review, some of the authors use their first name only, while others have posted their full names; the teens have a choice in how they are portrayed.

The Central Rappahannock Regional Library (CRRL), Virginia, hosts the very lively TeensPoint site that posts poetry, art, short stories, reviews, and art provided by teens. Their Writer’s Corner online submission form says:

“The Central Rappahannock Regional Library will review each submission before the work is posted to TeensPoint. You will be contacted via email once your work is published. CRRL reserves the right to edit or refuse submissions. Please be sure to proof and edit your work carefully. Be sure to check for misspelled words, incorrect punctuation, missing apostrophes, incomplete sentences and any other

errors. Submissions will be edited for content, but any spelling or grammatical errors will not be corrected.”

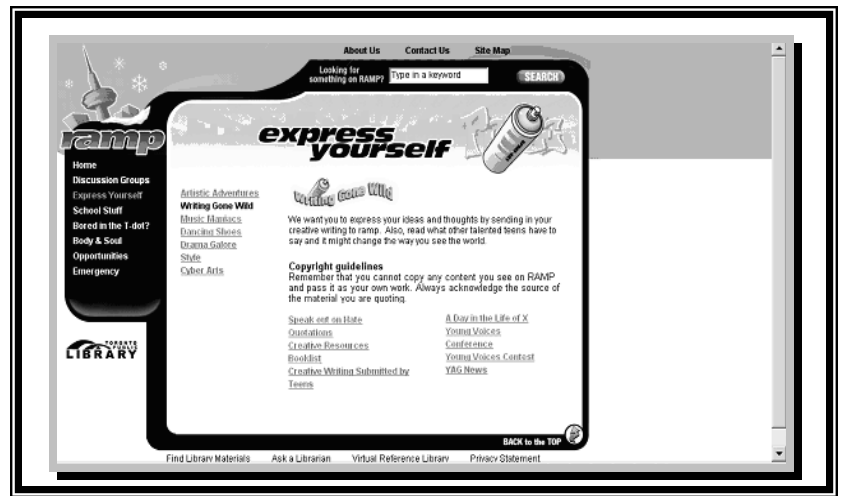
<http://www.teenspoint.org>

The CRRL seems mostly concerned about the editing process: reserving the right to alter submissions because of the content, and the statement encourages the teen to do a good job in editing their own work.

The Toronto Public Library’s teen Web site, Ramp, posts art and writing by teens. Ramp is clear about how long it will take to post the work (within two weeks) and the length it will stay on (90 days). The site makes clear that the personal information of the teens is protected by the library. The Ramp online submission form acts as their disclaimer, and says:

“Remember that you cannot copy any content you see on RAMP and pass it as your own work. Always acknowledge the source of the material you are quoting.”

Ramp is concerned about protecting the work from plagiarism.



RAMP Screenshot

This concern seems differs from the *Seven Hills Review* which was concerned about the submissions themselves being original.

Policies against plagiarism, acknowledgement of the teen’s copyrights, privacy statements, a length of time that it will take to accept or decline a submission, a length of time the work will be posted online, editorial policies, right of the library to use the teen’s material in promotion, and right to refuse submissions are all important elements of an agreement between a teen and the library host. The benefits of having a clear release statement are mutual for teens and libraries. They both will know what to expect from one another.