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**Library Copyright Alliance Applauds Introduction of Unlocking Technology Act**

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The Library Copyright Alliance (LCA) applauds the introduction on May 9, 2013, of H.R. 1892, the Unlocking Technology Act of 2013, by Reps. Zoe Lofgren (D-CA), Thomas Massie (R-KY), Anna Eshoo (D-CA), and Jared Polis (D-CO). The bill guarantees that legitimate uses of digital works and technologies will not run afoul of copyright law, even if they require breaking digital locks. Prompted by the recent uproar over cell phone unlocking, the bill recognizes that issue as a symptom of a much larger problem and would fix that problem permanently.

The Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), passed in 1998, made it illegal for owners of legally purchased digital media and technologies to modify their property if it would break digital rights management (DRM) and other forms of digital locks. The DMCA placed a shadow over a host of normal activities of libraries and their patrons: ripping DVDs to facilitate teaching and learning, converting ebooks to accessible formats, modifying tablets to run different software, and more. Under current law, libraries and their patrons must ask the Copyright Office for special carve-outs every three years to allow these kinds of uses, even though they don’t infringe copyright. The Office has issued some favorable rules for library uses, but those rules are limited in scope, difficult to win, and can be revoked by the Office at any future rulemaking. Indeed, it was the revocation of the cell phone unlocking exception that raised recent alarms about the DMCA and the power it gives the Copyright Office.

The Unlocking Technology Act does away with this bizarre aspect of the DMCA, freeing all non-infringing uses regardless of their effect on DRM. Importantly, the Act also permits the creation and distribution of tools required for unlocking, without which the right to unlock would be useless. LCA applauds the sponsors for their leadership and vision, and urges others in the House to support this important bill.


The Library Copyright Alliance (LCA) consists of three major library associations—the American Library Association, the Association of Research Libraries, and the Association of College and Research Libraries. These three associations collectively represent over 300,000 information professionals and thousands of libraries of all kinds throughout the United States and Canada. Find us on the web at [http://librarycopyrightalliance.org/](http://librarycopyrightalliance.org/).

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