

Abstract**Legal research on disputes over webtoon
copyrighted works**

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The webtoon industry is one of the representative digital content fields that started in Korea and is spreading worldwide. Webtoons are a digital comic format that can be easily accessed through the Internet, and have experienced explosive growth, especially with the popularization of smartphones. Naver Webtoon and Kakao Webtoon have established themselves as representative platforms in Korea, and Naver Webtoon's global services, such as 'LINE Webtoon' and 'WebComics', have secured an international fan base by providing webtoons translated into various languages. These platforms provide new content every day through numerous webtoon artists and works, and operate various business models that support webtoon artists' revenue generation. Unlike comics that were intended for publication, webtoons are quickly provided to the platform by multiple people working together, and modifications are easy, so each person who contributed to the work may think that they are the copyright holder, and there have been considerable internal disputes, large and small, due to complaints about the distribution of copyright profits.

First, the disputes that frequently occur between writers and illustrators are conflicts of opinion on whether the work can be separated. The courts usually focus on whether the comic book work is plagiarized from the 'illustrator' work, and it is true that video

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producers who purchase the film rights also purchase the film rights by purchasing the character rights from the ‘illustrator’, which has left writers significantly alienated. However, it is true that it is difficult to create a webtoon if the writer does not provide the story, and the importance of a joint authorship agreement was suggested as a solution to this problem. In addition, the lack of understanding of joint works between webtoon writers and assistant writers was reexamined to examine the current Supreme Court’s attitude in the event of a copyright dispute in the future. An assistant writer who receives a service fee from a webtoon writer is interpreted in the Copyright Act as someone who helps the webtoon writer with his or her work as an assistant, not a joint author, even if he or she is currently quite capable. Therefore, in cases where the copyright of an excellent assistant writer must be separately recognized, the webtoon writer must clearly state whether or not he or she intends to co-author and write this in the contract to avoid copyright disputes with the assistant writer.

In addition, we have tried to minimize future confusion in the webtoon industry and contribute to its development by organizing disputes that may arise when secondary works are created with or without permission in webtoon works and studying the standards in advance.

Keywords

webtoon works, webtoon writers, Combined works, joint works, secondary works