TITLe
Making Property: The Strange Career of Superman

SPEAKER
A/P Ian Gordon

Day, Date, Time, Venue
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Abstract
In a 72 page judgment handed down March 26, 2008 Judge Stephen Larson of the United States District Court restored “copyright in the Superman material that was published in Action Comics Vol. 1” in June 1938 to the heirs of Jerome Siegel, one of Superman’s two creators. To the casual observer this might seem to settle the matter of just who owns Superman, but that is still an issue before the courts because of the intricacies of the law, not least of which is the different property regimes of copyright and trademark. In this talk I will trace the history of Superman’s lucrative property rights (the Smallville television series alone has generated at least $300 million in profit) and the fight over those rights. I will also discuss how fan activity in the digital age is forcing change in the way corporations seek to profit from their property rights and address issues of human agency in the consumption of media product.

About the Speaker