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Science Fiction and the Law

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Law tends to be reactive: a problem arises, and then a law is made to address it. In the present age of rapid technological change (which often features unintended consequences), law must adapt to become predictive and forward looking. Consider the context of human space activities and the rising dangers associated with space debris. For laws to address these issues, foresight is imperative but often lacking. While science fiction is overlooked or even mocked by scholars as irrelevant fantasy, it can provide useful predictions regarding future legal problems and help law be proactive. Science fiction's ability to speculate and predict allows humanity's prowess for imagination to be brought to bear as a useful tool to address these emerging legal problems. The time is now to buckle up and expand our thought and legal horizons. Technology is moving fast; science fiction can help the law keep up.

Joel Welch