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Fanfiction: how copyright violation can benefit brands

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Fanfiction: how copyright violation can benefit brands

Every year, hundreds of thousands of stories are published on Fanfiction websites. These stories deepen fan relationships with beloved media franchises by letting them return to the characters, settings, and plots they love. Brands have not always recognized this, and in some cases have pursued copyright claims against fanfiction authors, who are disproportionately LGBTQ+. In my research, I use large scale data sets to demonstrate that removing this legal threat spurs increased fanfiction production. Additionally, my experimental work shows that reading fanfiction can increase purchase intent for future brand products, which suggests that brand antagonism to fanfiction authors may be misguided. My goal is to bring attention to fanfiction as a form of consumer engagement that has been largely overlooked in the marketing literature, and to bridge the gap between the humanities and quantitative marketing research.