

# Legal Protection for Local Animators in Animation Production in the Digital Era

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**Abstract.** *Digital transformation has opened up great opportunities for the creative industry, but at the same time presents complex challenges for the legal protection of local animators. This research aims to analyze the forms of legal protection for local animators in the digital era and identify obstacles in its implementation. The research method used is normative juridical with a statutory approach. The research results show that legal protection for animators has been accommodated through Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright as cinematographic works which include moral rights and economic rights, implemented through license agreements. However, implementation is still hampered by high rates of digital piracy, the weak bargaining position of animators in work contracts (work for hire), and the uncertainty of freelance work status. Synchronization between copyright regulations and labor law is needed to ensure the welfare of local animators in Indonesia.*

**Keywords:** *Animator; Copyright; Digital; Legal; Protection.*

## 1. Introduction

The development of digital technology and the industrial revolution 4.0 have transformed the global creative industry business landscape, including in Indonesia, where the animation industry has become a significant driver of the digital economy (Ahmad Budi Setiawan, 2018). However, this growth creates a paradox for the local animator workforce who are in a vulnerable position in facing legal and business complexities. Legal protection for this profession is generally regulated in Article 40 paragraph (1) letter m of Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright, which states that cinematographic works are protected works, as well as various regulations in Law Number 13 of 2003 concerning Manpower (Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright, LNRI of 2014 Number 266, TLN Number 5599, Article 40 paragraph (1) letter m). Despite these regulations, protection of animators' economic and moral rights is often neglected, especially in unequal freelance employment relationships.

The primary legal issue in this research is the regulatory gap, or vacuum of protection, for animators. There is a clash between the theory of legal protection, which should be preventative and repressive, and the reality that copyright regulations only focus on the object of the work, while labor regulations fail to address the flexible characteristics of digital work models (project-based) (Ritawati Ritawati, et al., 2021). Therefore, this study formulates the

problem of what forms of legal protection exist for local animators in the digital era and what obstacles they face in upholding these rights. The purpose of this study is to analyze the existing forms of legal protection and identify obstacles to their implementation in order to formulate fair policy recommendations. The urgency of this research lies in the importance of creating legal certainty for creative industry players so that the national animation business ecosystem can grow healthily and sustainably.

This research differs from previous studies, such as May Linda Iswaningsih's (2021) work, which focused on the protection of local workers in the Job Creation Law in general, and Fitri's (2024) research, which examined literary copyright on the Wattpad app. The novelty of this research lies in its specific focus on the synchronization of copyright and labor law regimes for animators in the digital era, which also considers the impact of the latest technological developments, such as artificial intelligence, on the protection of their work.

## **2. Research Methods**

This research uses normative legal research or doctrinal research. The normative position of this research is by emphasizing the analysis of written positive legal norms, particularly regarding the synchronization between copyright and employment regulations in providing protection for creative industry workers. The research approach used is a statute approach to examine laws related to the legal issue of animator protection, as well as a conceptual approach that departs from the views and doctrines developed in legal science to build legal arguments. The legal materials used include primary legal materials in the form of laws and regulations such as the Copyright Law and the Employment Law, as well as secondary legal materials including literature books, scientific journals, and previous research results. The technique of collecting legal materials is carried out through library research by collecting and reviewing data from relevant literature. All collected legal materials are then analyzed using descriptive qualitative analysis methods to provide an in-depth and comprehensive understanding of the issues raised in this research.

## **3. Results and Discussion**

### **3.1. Forms of Legal Protection for Local Animator Workforce from a Business Law Perspective in Indonesia**

Legal protection for animator workers in Indonesia is basically based on the recognition of their work as objects of Intellectual Property Rights (IPR) (Ni Putu Fanny Mertyan, et al., 2023). In the positive legal framework, animated works are classified as part of cinematographic works as regulated in Article 40 paragraph (1) letter m of Law Number 28 of 2014 concerning Copyright (UUHC). Cinematography is defined as a creation in the form of moving images, including cartoons or animations made based on a certain scenario. As a creator, an animator has exclusive rights consisting of moral rights to protect the integrity of the creator's name, as well as economic rights to obtain financial benefits from the commercial use of his work.

In the digital age, these protection challenges are increasingly complex due to the ease of illegal duplication and distribution of content. The primary mechanism used to guarantee animators' economic rights is through licensing agreements. Licenses serve as legal instruments that provide a basis for others to legally use animated characters or works, while also preventing exploitation without adequate compensation. Without a clear license, the use of animated works by other businesses is categorized as copyright infringement, which can be prosecuted under civil and criminal law under the Copyright Law.

In addition to intellectual property rights, protection for animators also intersects with labor law, especially for those who work freelance or on a project basis. Effective legal protection must be able to guarantee that the transfer of economic rights from animators to employers (through employment contracts) still takes into account the welfare of animators as creative workers. Therefore, synchronization between the Copyright regime and Labor Law is essential to provide comprehensive legal certainty for local animators to prevent exploitation amidst the rapid development of the digital creative industry. It is important to understand that protection for animators in the Copyright Law does not stop only at the recognition of works, but also includes the protection of moral rights that are inherently inherent to the creator. Moral rights guarantee that the animator's name must remain included in every use of the work, and prevent distortion or modification of the work that could damage the animator's honor or reputation (Regent, et al., 2021). On the other hand, economic rights grant animators the exclusive right to permit or prohibit others from duplicating, distributing, or publishing their animated works. In business practices in the digital era, a clear separation between moral rights and economic rights is a key safeguard for animators to prevent them from losing control of their creations, even if the work has been commercialized by a company or third party through a specific agreement.

### **3.2. Obstacles in Implementing Legal Protection for Local Animators in the Digital Era**

The implementation of legal protection for local animators in Indonesia still faces both structural and technical obstacles. The main obstacle is the high rate of copyright infringement in the digital space. Easy internet access allows unscrupulous parties to copy and distribute animated works without permission on a large scale (Ritawati Ritawati, et al., 2021). Even though the Content ID system is available on platforms like YouTube, many local animators do not yet understand the technical protection mechanisms in depth, so the challenges of monetization and copyright claims remain complex issues in this era of digital disruption (Resa Ajeng Setianingrum, et al., 2025).

Besides piracy, a serious obstacle is also identified in the vulnerability of animators, the majority of whom work freelance. Flexible work patterns in the creative industry often place animators in a weak bargaining position when dealing with business contracts. Many animators sign employment agreements that contain clauses that require a total transfer of economic rights (work for hire) without any ongoing royalties (Ni Putu Fanny Mertiyana, 2023). This phenomenon creates a situation where animators are on the verge of creative excitement

but are simultaneously trapped in economic vulnerability due to the lack of certainty of social protection and decent wage standards for creative workers (Ulfah Nur Hikmawati, 2023).

Finally, administrative obstacles such as low legal awareness and minimal oversight from relevant agencies also hamper the effectiveness of legal protection. Copyright protection in the digital age requires active oversight, but in practice, coordination between government agencies in providing legal assistance to artists remains very limited (Micael Jeriko Damanik, et al., 2023). As a result, many animators choose to ignore violations of their rights, believing the legal process to be too complicated and the costs disproportionate to the potential benefits. Without strong coordination between copyright regulations and responsive law enforcement, legal protection for animators will remain merely normative, with no real impact on their well-being (Regent, et al., 2021).

#### **4. Conclusion**

Based on the research results and discussion, several conclusions can be drawn as follows: Legal protection for local animators in Indonesia has been normatively accommodated through the Copyright regime for cinematographic works (Law No. 28 of 2014), which encompasses moral and economic rights. This protection is implemented through licensing agreements, which serve as legal instruments to guarantee economic compensation to animators for the use of their work on various digital platforms. The implementation of these protections still faces significant obstacles, including high rates of digital piracy and limited technical understanding of platform protection systems (Content ID). Furthermore, the vulnerable bargaining position of animators in work-for-hire contracts and the uncertainty of freelance work status leave animators on the verge of a creative passion with minimal social protection. The lack of coordination and legal assistance from relevant agencies also weakens the enforcement of the rights of local animators in Indonesia. The government and related agencies need to increase the socialization of legal literacy for creative industry players regarding licensing contracts, and there needs to be synchronization between copyright regulations and employment laws to ensure the welfare of animators as creative workers.

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