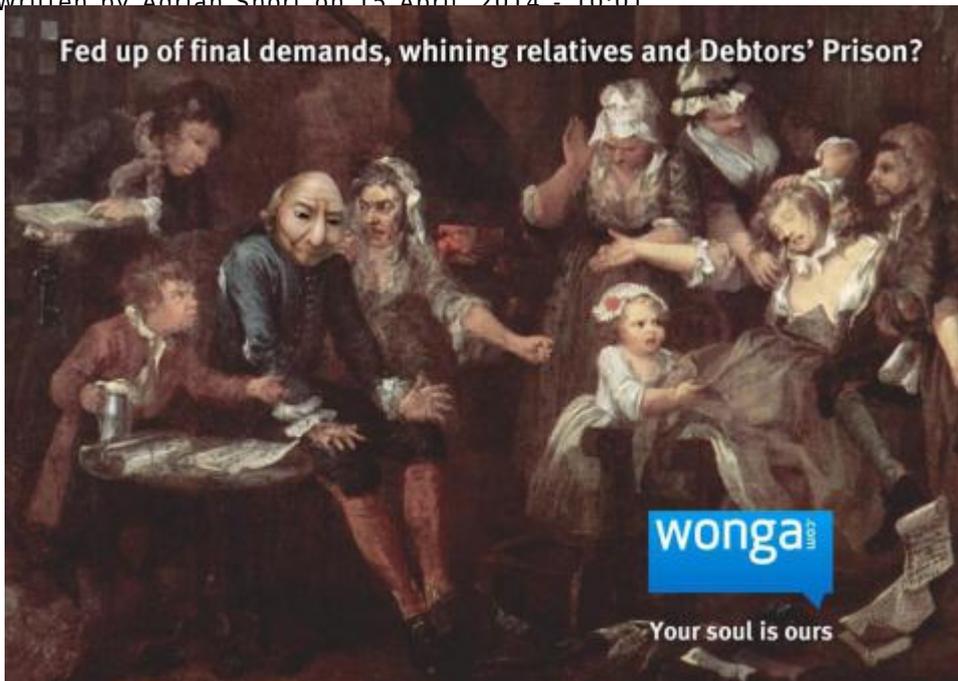


Free speech victory as Wonga backs down on parody copyright claim [1]

Written by Adrian Short on 15 April 2014 - 10:01



Payday lender Wonga has backed down on its [attempt to remove a parody advert](#) [2] criticising them from Twitter after thousands of users (and the Pirate Party UK) defied the company by reposting the picture.

[Wonga said:](#) [3]

"We accept that we were a little heavy-handed last week when we issued a Twitter Takedown notice for [@BrandySnap](#) [4]'s image, and having seen the full 'Streisand Effect' ourselves, we won't be pursuing the notice"

The [Streisand effect](#) [5] occurs when an attempt to remove or cover up information leads to it gaining significantly more attention than it would have done otherwise.

Wonga was on shaky legal ground by using a copyright claim under the United States Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) to ask Twitter to remove the image, although Twitter complied at first. Parody and criticism are protected as "fair use" under US copyright law.

This is a genuine victory for free speech as thousands of Twitter users have asserted their right to take part in vigorous and critical debate online, regardless of corporate sensitivities. Twitter needs to improve the way that

it handles DMCA takedown notices so that protected free speech such as parody is defended as the law intends.

Tags:

Wonga [6]
Copyright [7]
Parody [8]
Free Speech [9]
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- [4] <https://twitter.com/BrandySnap>
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