

Short film with multiple rights holders and other potential co-authors

Scenario: Academic C has a short film that was directed by her, edited by a second person and contains a script written by a third. A few friends acted

in the film, and another friend suggested some ideas for shots and contributed extra fragments of dialogue during the shoot.

Rights Issues: In the film the director and writer will own copyright in their respective works. The duration of their copyright is for 70 years from their deaths. The editor of the film is unlikely to have copyright in the film, as although the editor undoubtedly contributes to the creative process his role is not usually deemed autonomous enough to merit co-authorship rights. UK law was amended in 1996 to include rights for all performers in film, and performers' rights last for 50 years after the year in which the performance took place. The person who contributed ideas and chipped in with some dialogue may have rights in the work depending on the extent of their contribution.

Resolution: In order to deposit the film in the repository all the rights holders will have to have given their consent in writing. In this case this means the film director, writer and all the performers. The person who contributed some of their time and ideas is less easily defined in terms of rights, and may need to be asked for their consent. To avoid confusion at a later date it is highly recommended that all contributors sign a contract at the time of the making of the work, attributing exactly who has what ownership.