

Case Study - Ben-Yehuda Project: Dealing with Legal Issues

Shani Evenstein

Chief Editor, Project Ben-Yehuda; Chairperson, The Hebrew Literature Digitization Association

For the past 13 years, Project Ben-Yehuda makes the classics of Hebrew literature (poetry and prose, but also essays, translations, and reference works) digitally accessible to Hebrew readers, for free and based solely on volunteer work. For that purpose, literary works are being scanned, manually typed, proofread, and finally converted into a format that is readable and searchable on the Internet, all for free and for the benefit of the general public.



In its first decade of existence, the project dealt only with literary works that are in the public domain. But that is not the case anymore; in the past two years the project's editors have expanded the project's scope beyond that of the public domain, getting special permission from copyright holders to publish literary works that are still copyrighted. The lecture will expand on the legal aspects of managing the project, focusing on the reasons that have led the project's editors to take such steps, the challenges involved, and some of the cultural and legal implications.