

Copyright judgment a 'landmark' for online publishing: Media 24

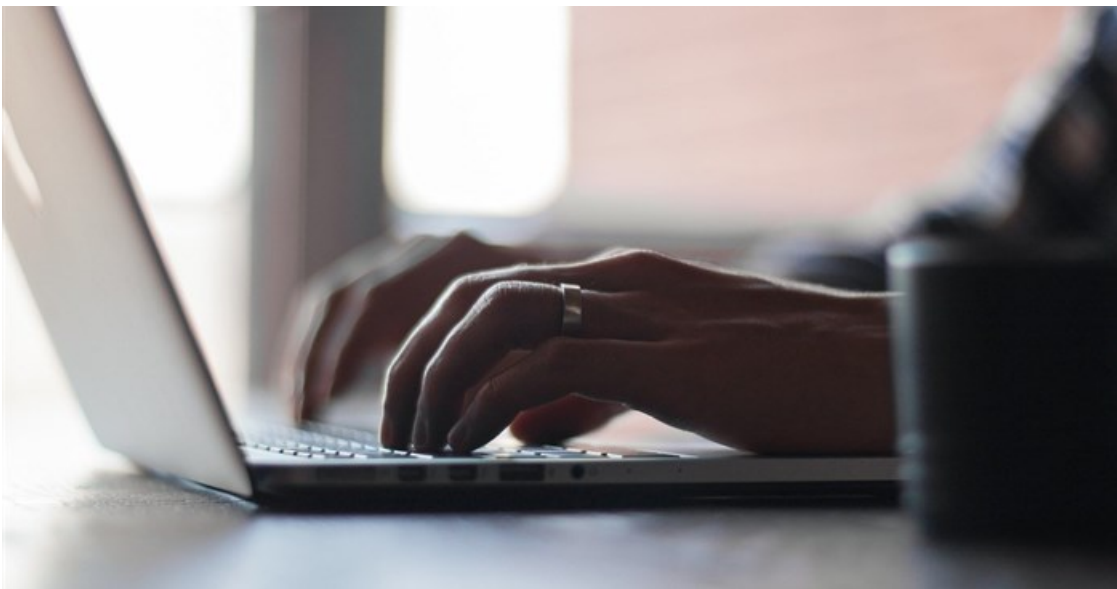
By [Ernest Mabuza](#)

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Media24 described Thursday's judgment, which dismissed six of Moneyweb's seven claims of copyright infringement, as a landmark ruling for online publishing.

Moneyweb sued Media 24's financial website Fin24 in 2013 for copyright infringement based on seven articles, published in 2012, which included news elements derived, with attribution, from Moneyweb.

The case was heard in May last year and judgment was passed on Thursday.



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In his judgment, acting Judge Daniel Berger found that Moneyweb did not prove originality in four of the seven articles. He also found that two of the articles Fin24 published from Moneyweb constituted fair use. Judge Berger found that there was one infringement by Fin24 of Moneyweb's copyright.

"This is a landmark judgment for online publishing, which is a fast-moving, dynamic environment that is causing major disruption in publishing across the board," said Media24 CE Esmaré Weideman.

She said the ruling vindicated Media24's conviction that its conduct was fair and lawful. "The fact that the court ordered Moneyweb to pay 70% of Media24's cost speaks for itself."

She said discovery and reporting did not move public domain news elements into a monopolised private domain. Weideman said to suggest otherwise, as Moneyweb did, would be contrary to the public interest in news dissemination.

"It would lead to the illogical result where the first reporter can monopolise a news story and prevent another reporter from re-reporting the story's core elements."

She said this could not be, and a contrary position would have been a world first and would have destroyed much of news reporting and many of today's journalists' jobs.

Weideman said the company took note of the court's ruling that Fin24 had infringed copyright in one article.

"We accept the court's decision and pride ourselves on ethical journalistic practice. Overall, this ruling is a huge victory for Fin24.

"It proves that aggregation and original reporting both have a place in modern journalism."

Adriaan Basson - newly appointed editor of News24, which includes the syndication service News24Wire, Fin24 and Sport24 - said significant investment was made to bolster News24's original content and journalism.

"We keep a constant eye on international best practice and fair dealing, which includes aggregation, an integral component of online publishing the world over, and have ensured that it is harmonised with the law."

Source: BDpro

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