**Creative industries working with regulators to make copyright work on the web**

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Next Wednesday, 9 December, we publishers will be sharing a platform with colleagues from the music, audiovisual, image, authors and consumer sectors along with the European Commission, which has partnered the creative industries on a two-year journey of innovation to improve legitimate access to online content: to help revolutionize creators’ ability to express their rights online as well as users’ ability to find content and associated permissions. This is certainly not the end of the journey, but, on the day that the European Commission is due to publish its long-awaited Communication “Towards a modern, more European Copyright Framework”, RDI (Rights Data Integration), this part-EU-funded digital copyright innovation project, is holding its final conference in Brussels anticipating many aspects of a “modern copyright framework”.

The RDI project is a prime example of industry listening to, engaging in constructive dialogue with and responding in a practical way to European regulators. Back in 2012, the European Publishers Council (EPC) responded to a call from the then Digital Agenda European Commissioner Neelie Kroes for “A Big Idea for the Digital Agenda” by putting together the Linked Content Coalition (LCC). This coalition of more than 40 partners from the media and creative industries, including representatives of authors and artists, worked together between March 2012 and April 2013 to make licensing on the web more efficient by establishing a new technical framework to facilitate automated communications on copyright between rightsholders and those who wish to use content.

In plain terms, the LCC framework provides a kind of automated translation/signposting/license delivery hub so that, whatever your content, however its rights are expressed currently (and there are many different rights expression languages for different media types), the LCC hub interprets all the necessary rights information attached to that content and ultimately communicates that information to the person or indeed machine who wants to use it. It’s about translating rights data into a common language. It’s about making it possible for rightsholders to be able to communicate their copyright and for end-users to be able to find that copyright easily and seamlessly online.

The Rights Data Integration project (RDI) is a pilot project co-funded by the media sector and the European Commission to prove the efficacy and to implement this new LCC automated rights technology that the LCC coalition partners created. RDI aims to demonstrate how, using the LCC framework, participants in the content supply chain (eg writers, film-makers, broadcasters, photographers, artists, journalists, musicians) can manage and trade digital rights for all types of usage across all types of content (physical, digital or abstract) in all media and under any (or indeed no) commercial model.

The 27-month project has now come to an end, but solutions created by RDI will now be taken forward by some of those companies who took part in the development.

RDI is a direct and practical response to the European Commission’s call for the creation of a Digital Single Market, one of the aims being to improve and widen people's access to cultural content online – thereby nurturing cultural diversity – while opening new opportunities for creators and the content industry.

The Commission’s Communication on Wednesday will say that the digital single market’s aim is to deliver opportunities and to recognise the value of content and the investment that goes into it. This is crucial for the creative industries. As for publishers, it is testament to our commitment to upholding freedom of expression through quality journalism that over 100 million newspapers are sold each day, many via apps and online subscriptions and over 360 million Europeans read magazines regularly. Europeans still watch almost four hours of TV daily and have over 3,300 online video services to choose from. The rich body of Europe’s scientific, technical and medical journals are downloadable and searchable while 9 million book titles are published each year, 2.5 million of which are already in digital formats. None of this would have been possible without a stable EU copyright framework, the freedom to contract and innovation in licensing.

The RDI project will directly benefit:

•Anyone wishing to access and re-use online content easily and legally, whether individuals or businesses

•Anyone wishing to create, upload and build business models around online content, whether individuals or businesses

•Authors and individual professional artists of all types of online content wishing to make their work identifiable in machine-readable language

•Businesses wishing to improve the efficiency of their licensing and rights management departments

•Regulators working to improve licensing and to boost the digital economy

We are very proud of this achievement. The EU Copyright debate will continue and all the players in the digital content eco-system will have their different points of view, including those whose business models are built on the back of freeloading others’ content and others who have a fundamental and philosophical disagreement with the whole notion of intellectual property rights. RDI doesn’t solve all the problems but it goes a long way to solving a major one and to plugging the technical gap that prevented existing copyright from working on the web.

Anyone wishing to attend the RDI event can register at: http://www.rdi-project.org/#!registration/cd7r

Rdi-project.org

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