

Authors of the world: Co-operate now!

Authors today face enormous challenges. To meet these, we need to better understand the underlying issues as well as strengthen our international efforts and agree on an effective coping strategy to deal with increasingly on-line and therefore global issues.

The authors gathered at the Authors' International Forum in Oslo 20th October 2009 have identified the following as major challenges:

- Today's national and cross border concentration of media ownership has led to increased use of standard exploitation contracts (often buy-outs);
- Competition law is misused to prevent authors and performers from collective bargaining and action, and to some extent also from collective management of their works;
- Increased pressure from publishers and producers to achieve presumption rules which result in the automatic transfer of copyright in their favour;
- Consumers show a general ignorance of, and lack of support for, copyright.

The Need for Balanced Agreements

The authors' and performers' lack of influence and income due to the current imbalance of power in contractual negotiations is already causing visible damage to our culture and knowledge. The legal framework must ensure protection against unfair contracts and afford an incentive for collective bargaining, and for agreed standard documents. This would result in more balanced agreements, enabling more authors to create and maintain an ongoing influence on, and income from, their works. This in turn would lead to less monopolisation, more pluralism and greater knowledge sharing.

The Key elements for success

- Authors need to have effective organisations and better co-operation amongst the different creator groups at national, regional and global levels;
- Publishers and producers need to learn to see and treat authors as equal partners and co-operate in order to regain public support for adequate copyright protection.
- A major effort must be made to communicate with all consumer groups in order to achieve a shared understanding of the right balance between the importance of copyright protection for authors, and straightforward, legal access to culture, information and knowledge for users and consumers.

The Authors International Forum

The Authors' International Forum takes upon itself the task of furthering these goals looking in particular to increase our representation of authors and performers throughout the world and to further strengthen the authors' positions in the ongoing partnership with publishers and producers.

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