

Coalition of content creators, publishers and producers

Role and needs of creators, publishers and producers of content in the information society

Proposals from a Coalition of content creators, publishers and producers (see signatories at end) for inclusion in the draft Declaration and Action Plan to be discussed at Prepcom 2, Geneva, 17-28 February 2003

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1. Role of creators, publishers and producers of content in the information society

Along with telecommunication providers and users, creators, publishers and producers of content are key actors in the information society and we believe the WSIS and any of its programs must reflect this.

The supply of a diversity of creative works and content is an essential engine for social, cultural, political and economic development. Creators, publishers and producers of content thus play a crucial role in promoting knowledge, creativity and science. As such, they are fully involved in the information society, which offers enhanced means of communication, dissemination and transmission of knowledge.

The viewpoints and needs of creators, publishers and producers of content must be fully taken into account at all stages of the WSIS and should be made a key part of the envisaged declaration of principles and plan of action.

2. New Challenges – how to make the most of the Information Society

Principles: The electronic and network environment introduces many changes in the way content is created, produced and disseminated. Creators, publishers and producers need freedom as well as support to explore the new possibilities. Basic education of the audience and creators, publishers and producers is a prerequisite for content dissemination.

Recommendations: For content industries to fully contribute to, and benefit from, the new challenges and opportunities:

- they must have facilitated access to information and communication technologies (ICTs) and training, in order to be acquainted with new models of content creation, production and dissemination
- Appropriate incentives for a diversified creation may be needed and an approach respectful of cultural and linguistic identities should be favoured
- increased government funding for education and literacy
- connecting users to the internet, especially in developing countries and disadvantaged groups in developed nations
- providing users, not only children but also parents and teachers, with appropriate training for the use of ICTs and new learning models (distance learning, online textbooks and reference materials)

3. Towards a framework that rewards creativity, diversity and freedom of expression

Principle: Creation and dissemination of digital content necessitate time, effort, skill and investment. Creativity is best stimulated via copyright protection. Copyright encourages progress and diversity and is a requirement, rather than a limitation, for making content available to users. “Free access to information” cannot and should not mean “free of charge”. The potential of intellectual property rights can be used for job creation growth, prosperity and for dissemination of information and know-how. Intellectual property protection promotes innovation and investment and helps develop a market for a large variety of on-line and off-line content.

Principle: For the information society to provide creative incentives to the best possible extent, creators, publishers and producers of content shall also fully enjoy their right to freedom of expression, including the freedom to publish, as internationally accepted.

Recommendations: Protecting the rights of creators, publishers and producers of content in the information society should include:

- being aware that while the fundamental principles underlying copyright in the physical world remain the same in the electronic environment, cyberspace leads to increased unauthorized copying and requires new ways of securing smooth circulation of content
- high world-wide copyright protection standards, implemented in national legislation, which are well-suited for the electronic environment, for example the WIPO Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty
- adequate and effective copyright enforcement standards
- copyright awareness and education
- an adequate environment to enable Digital Rights Management
- an international framework for the protection of non-original databases
- Any regulation which would amount to pre-publication censorship must be avoided, taking into account the usages of different content sectors.
- the primary responsibility for determining what content to access should remain with the individual internet user; parents should take the primary responsibility for determining what their children should access
- international co-operation and exchange should be favoured and the development of voluntary best practices should be considered

Concluding remarks

The organisations submitting this statement representing creators, publishers and producers of content invite all actors of the WSIS to take the above into full consideration and stand ready to assist WSIS organisers and participants to integrate these proposals in all discussions and documents of the Summit.

This statement is supported by the following organisations:

European Writers' Congress (EWC)

Federation Internationale des Associations de Producteurs de Films (FIAPF)

International Association of Scientific, Technical and Medical Publishers (STM)

International Publishers Association (IPA)

International Video Federation (IVF)

Motion Picture Association (MPA)