Linked Content Coalition

NEWS RELEASE

UNIQUE INDUSTRY COLLABORATION LAUNCHES NEW RIGHTS MODEL TO IMPROVE LEGAL ACCESS TO ONLINE CONTENT

A unique collaboration between different parts of the global creative industry, under the umbrella of the Linked Content Coalition (LCC), has resulted in the creation of an innovative technical Framework to make it possible to manage and access online rights information seamlessly across all types of media and content, whether text, image, sound or audio-visual.

The LCC Framework includes the innovative Rights Reference Model (RRM) together with radical Best Practice Principles for using identifiers and communicating information about rights through supply chains. This marks a highly significant development that brings together for the first time licensing data models and languages for all kinds of content.

The release of the Framework marks the completion of the first stage of the LCC's work. LCC also plans to use the Framework to create standards that will help enable the millions of individuals and small companies who now add content directly onto the Web every day to identify and manage their own rights much more effectively.

LCC Chairman and Senior Vice-President of Investor Relations and Public Affairs for Axel Springer, Christoph Keese said: "This is a major step in streamlining and automating rights management for media and the creative industries. Now we will test the Framework in a major project, co-funded by the European Commission. The LCC's unique collaboration will continue groundbreaking work particularly in multimedia rights identification whereby each and every online creation can be identified, tracked and linked back to its creators. This will tackle the burgeoning problem of digital orphans when creators upload new self-published works to the networks and video platforms. In future, by declaring rights at point of upload, creators will get recognition and indeed have the opportunity to get paid."

The number of new and adapted works of all media types (text, image, audio, audiovisual) loaded or created on the internet each day is now greater than the total published analogue output of civilisation. This figure was negligible ten years ago. The result is an unimaginable number of new daily digital orphans – content whose identity and rights are inaccessible to users or service providers in any automated way.

Robert Madelin, Director General of DG Connect of the European Commission said: "This important step to make cross-Europe license use easier and faster is a welcome demonstration that innovative thinking and innovative data management are combining. It is good that Brussels could help catalyse this endeavour first through the Digital Agenda and now with EU Research funding for the all-important test phase, but all credit to the tenacity and good will of the private sector in making this happen."

The LCC Framework does not dictate business models but supports an infrastructure for the creative industries to develop their own. The RRM will be a catalyst to encourage the automated management of content rights in the digital network. The LCC provides a technical framework for interoperability: how it is used is entirely up to those who wish to benefit from it.

Angela Mills Wade, Executive Director of the European Publishers Council (EPC), the organisation that first initiated the LCC, said: "There is a huge and rapidly expanding amount of digital content available throughout the internet, but it is often difficult for either companies or individuals who want to trade in rights to find each other. The LCC Framework addresses this problem head on and aims to secure the highest possible level of automation in licensing. This will reduce barriers to entry, reduce cost in the supply chain, increase volume of use and encourage innovation."

The LCC Framework is now available for peer review. It is also being tested in a project co-funded by the European Commission called Rights Data Integration (RDI), due to start in May. This takes live data Sources and Exchanges from all major content sectors and will create a prototype multi-media rights data hub.

Meanwhile, discussions are underway for the LCC's Rights Reference Model to form the basis of the UK's new "Copyright Hub". The Copyright Hub is being built and led by the UK's creative industries following recommendations in the Hargreaves Report commissioned by the UK Government. When completed, the Hub will be a portal with intelligent connections to a wide range of websites, digital copyright exchanges and databases in the UK and around the world, with the focus on making copyright licensing easier and cheaper for and in the digital age.

Richard Hooper CBE, Chairman of the Copyright Hub Launch Group, said: "In our final report Copyright Works, Dr Ros Lynch and I fully supported the work of LCC and said it was "a very necessary and real building block for the Copyright Hub". Less than a year later we are delighted that LCC has published its recommended data architecture and best practice guidelines. We now plan to ensure that this work is properly plugged into the work of the Copyright Hub, so that the data problems of the past that have been harming easier copyright licensing are left where they should be – in the past."

The LCC collaboration has been so successful that it is proposing to form a consortium of standards bodies in order to continue the cross-media cooperation and in order to continue to work on projects to boost the digital economy.

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Notes for Editors:

- **Linked Content Coalition**
- **LCC FAQs**
- **Hooper Report, Copyright Works**
- **Copyright Hub**
- **Digital Agenda Big Ideas**
- **ARROW**: The EU has also funded another important digitisation project, ARROW to facilitate rights information management in any digitisation project involving text and image based works.
  More information here and here.