Publishers are not bad guys
A strategy for changing the reputation of copyright in the Italian academic environment

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The issue
Copyright as an obstacle to the progress of science

• In the academic environment publishers are bad guys

• Copyright is guilty for every difficulty the researchers meet
  ➢ In particular, for budgetary issues

• Focus on research rather than on didactic
  ➢ Italian publishers more involved in didactic than in research

• The publishers association not an interlocutor anymore for the academic institutions
  ➢ Though academics regularly work with publishers
The strategy
The message: *Publishers care*

- The evolution of didactic in higher education a key publishers’ interest
- Publishers serve the university through providing educational content
- Quality of higher education is an objective that publishers share

**The Strategy**
Offering interesting data and occasions for debating about core issues for the Italian academics
A survey on the lecturers’ view

• È-book (è = is)

• A survey on how students study and on how they would like studying
  ➢ In collaboration with the University of Milan-Bicocca

• Two editions: 2014 and 2015
  ➢ Questionnaire to 2000 students
  ➢ Linked to a contest (creating a slogan about books and university)
  ➢ 3 prizes = 1000€ voucher to buy books
  ➢ 2000 c.ca students respondents

• Interesting findings
  ➢ E.g: no preference towards digital over print
    o “Digital natives are also print natives”!

• Public presentations in some academic environment
  ... and an e-book published
A survey on the lecturers’ view

- **2016** - in collaboration with Fondazione Giovanni Agnelli and University of Milan

- Qualitative interviews to 100 Italian professors of different disciplines on:
  - Planning of didactic in their university
  - The didactic methodology
  - Method of students’ assessment
  - Books and other didactic material assigned
  - Courses attended to improve their didactic

- First presentation in the Italian Parliament
  - Very large and qualified audience

- The main author invited to present the survey many times in several universities

- A [slide-book](#) published
Mock trials during the Italian book fair

- Two editions of “Processo all’Università” (2017-2018)

- Rigorous role play:
  - Very precise indictment
    - Starting from data (2017 ex.: “The social elevator is broken”) to find who is guilty (OECD, *A Broken Social Elevator? How to Promote Social Mobility*, 2018)
  - Equal opportunities to accusation and defence, moderated by a judge
  - High reputation “lawyers” and judge
  - Each lawyer calls 2 witness that the other can cross-examine
  - The verdict by the audience (red or green cards)
  - *(No publishers speaking)*

- Very much appreciated by all participant
  - “Black and white” arguments
  - Unknown end (also for us)
    - First edition: Not-guilty
    - Second edition: Guilty
Result
Publishers care (the message passed)

• We gained reputation in the academic milieus, which was the main purpose

• It also worked with politicians
  ➢ Though now we need to start from scratch with the new Government

• In the last two years the publishers association and/or publishers regularly invited as speakers to main conferences about the future of Italian university