

## Working together to provide access: The results speak for themselves



**By Olav Stokkmo, IFRRO Chief Executive**

“Actions speak louder than words” and “Where there’s a will there’s a way” - Proverbs can often be contradictory or tell only half the story. In an area as complex and lively as Copyright, bringing stakeholders together is often the best way to get agreement on action. Ultimately you will be judged by the results and these will only come when there is a real willingness to reach concrete agreements that deliver access.

Access to cumulative knowledge and cultural heritage is increasingly being seen as crucial to fostering development and cultural diversity and independence. Collective management organisations, such as RROs, the collectives in the print and publishing sector, play a vital role in assisting authors and publishers to provide sustainable access to intellectual property in both developed and developing countries.

2011 has certainly witnessed displays of political will to offer solutions to access copyright works. Many have been positive as in the case of the European Commission’s initiatives on Out of Commerce Works, which led to a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between stakeholders. Others, such as the renewal of attacks on copyright in Canada, I welcome less.

The Out of Commerce Works MoU, signed in September by representatives of authors, publishers and collective management organisations in the text and image based sector, including IFRRO, and libraries, addresses real issues and sets out pragmatic and realistic solutions. We need now to work hard to realise them with practical measures. An implementation Task Force made up of IFRRO and its members, which other stakeholders will be asked to join, seems indispensable.

2011 also saw the ARROW system becoming operational. In March Digital Agenda Commissioner Neelie Kroes reiterated her belief and commitment to ARROW, which she described as “leading the way in showing how larger groups of stakeholders can work together to form a new digital future”. She also expressed high ambitions for ARROW which she said had “huge potential”. Just how huge is only now becoming apparent. ARROW system tests, undertaken by the University Library of Innsbruck (UIBK) in the pilot countries have shown substantial time and cost benefits of using ARROW compared to the traditional manual search for copyright information. Time savings varied from 72% in the Spanish pilot to 97% in the UK. In large projects time savings at this level represent substantial cost reductions - for libraries as well as others who need to retrieve copyright information on books. In April the follow up project – ARROW Plus – started and will run to 30 September 2013. ARROW Plus builds on and further implements the ARROW system and aims to increase the number of countries in which ARROW is used; and broaden the types of works for which it is used to include visual material.

The prospect of enhanced access to intellectual property by persons with print disabilities also took important steps forward during the year. Independently of the WIPO Treaty discussions, which continue into 2012, numerous Trusted Intermediaries (TI) specialised in providing accessible copies, publishers and RROs in various countries have signed a

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MoU established by the TIGAR project under the WIPO Stakeholder Platform on cross border transfer of works and files in accessible formats. Transfer of files between TIs has already started. The TIGAR project and Treaty discussions are separate, not mutually exclusive, initiatives with the same goal: better access to copyright works for persons with print disabilities.

Now, as the year closes, we have another example of the political will to kick-start a process aimed at producing concrete solutions. Antonio Vitorino, a Portuguese former EU Commissioner has been asked by Commissioner Barnier to act as the mediator on copyright levies. Commissioner Barnier has reiterated that the principle of fair compensation for the use of copyright work is not at stake but the different schemes for the collection of revenues should be as efficient as possible. The aim is to finalise discussion by summer 2012. The previous negotiations were initiated by former Internal Market Commissioner McCreevy in 2009 involving rightholder groups and the IT industry and were interrupted by the unilateral withdrawal by the latter in early 2010 at a moment when they were very close to producing a workable agreement. IFRRO welcomes the resumption of the talks and declares itself ready and willing to act.

We look forward to this and other challenges in the coming year and wish all our members and partners a happy and restful end of year holiday.

# SEASON'S GREETINGS .2012

