

WIPO conference October 2011
Enabling Creativity in the Digital Environment:
Copyright Documentation and Infrastructure

PANEL: COPYRIGHT INFRASTRUCTURE FOR BUSINESS MODELS ONLINE

Victoriano Colodrón, RightsDirect / Copyright Clearance Center

1. Intro

- Copyright *management* is often quite a complicated endeavor, but copyright *licensing* or rights clearance should be an easy process for content users.
- This is the main idea that I will try to convey and illustrate to you today.
- And I will do it from the perspective of Copyright Clearance Center or CCC, a US based collective management organization that operates on a fully voluntary, opt-in basis for both rightholders and users in the field of text and image-based works.
- What we do at CCC is we deal with the many complexities of copyright management so that the users don't need to deal with them, and can have access instead to licensing services that are simple and efficient.
- What I will do now is I will first talk about our rights infrastructure where we currently manage more than 450 million individual rights, and I will then refer to 3 of our business models online.

2. CCC: A robust rights architecture

- So starting with my first point, I would like to give you an idea of some of the practical challenges and difficulties involved in the creation of a rights management system for a collective licensing organization. I will just refer to 5 very specific issues to be taken into account:

. The first is the different information categories that need to be gathered and accommodated in one of these systems: the works, the rightholders, the rights themselves, the licensing and pricing terms, the usage data and finally the details of payments made to rightholders. All these varied types of data need to be univocally identified and accurately described, they have to be kept up to date, and their quality has to be ensured.

. The second issue is the fact that things are a bit more complex when you manage not just one type of work but many different ones, among other things because some of the metadata will be different. In our case, we manage information on in print and out of print works including paper and electronic books and book chapters, journals and journal articles, images, videos, and blog posts.

. Thirdly, rights ownership can change and can be shared, and these systems need to reflect this fact. In our case, we manage in our system different rightholders in the same works, we

manage transfers of rights, reversion of rights to authors and rights owned by authors' estates.

. My fourth point is territoriality of rights as something that also needs to be reflected. So for each right on each work you need to manage if it's global or if it's geographically limited. And so does our database in order to support our domestic and multinational licenses.

. Finally, in a fully voluntary, opt-in systems like ours, the database has to be able to manage the price and terms details set by, in CCC's case, our more than 12,000 rightholders for each of their works within our pay-per-use licenses.

- 3 final points about the robust infrastructure that you need to have in place to deal with all this varied and complex information:

. First is modularity and scalability. CCC has a fully modular and scalable database architecture. What does this mean? On a very basic level, it means for instance that we don't only have all existing types of identifiers and bibliographic fields, but we can easily accommodate new ones when necessary. Modularity and scalability also mean that when we want to launch a new licensing service it can be supported by the existing infrastructure, and we don't need to build a totally new, separate one.

. Then I will mention standards. Use of standards which help identify works and rights is absolutely crucial. We use all the relevant industry standards to exchange works and rights information like the DOI or ONIX –and we are also active players in industry standard definition.

. And then my final keyword here is integration. Databases of this kind that are isolated do not make much sense. Our database for instance is dynamically tied in to other many databases and systems around the world, namely those of the biggest publishing houses with which we have live data-feeds in place but also others as I'll explain later.

3. Licensing on the content: RightsLink

- Now, starting with the 3 business models that I want to share with you today, I will first talk about one that is called RightsLink which involves placing the licensing mechanism where the content is and the where content consumption takes place.

- RightsLink is a licensing tool that was created by CCC in 2000 to allow publishers to license their digital content online from their own websites.

- So imagine that you as a user are reading on the Internet a newspaper article or a scientific article, and you want to get permission to re-publish that article in a different publication, to post it on your corporate website or to distribute printed copies in a conference.

- RightsLink automates and streamlines the whole rights clearance process, and so without leaving the publishers site you are able to choose a specific reuse permission type for the article that you need, and then buy a license with just a few clicks and within a couple of minutes.

- Publishers like The New York Times, The Wall Street Journal, The Economist, or scientific publishers like Elsevier, Nature or Springer and many others are using RightsLink to instantly grant licenses for many different types of reuse of e-books, articles, photos, graphs and videos.
- And since digital content is increasingly mobile these days, CCC recently launched a new mobile RightsLink feature which enables publishers to add licensing to their iPad or iPhone apps so that readers can get permissions on the go.

4. Licensing on the users' desktops and workflows: RightSphere and integration partnerships

- The second business model that I'm going to tell you about is one where we have integrated the licensing mechanism within the users' daily workflows.
- What does this mean? This means that if you are a researcher working for a company and you need to share some valuable article that you are reading on your computer, or if you work for a University and you are in charge of posting content to the electronic learning platform, you don't want to have to interrupt your workflow to obtain the permissions that you may need. So what if you had the rights information and the licensing mechanism just there on the software tool that you are using to do your work?
- This is what CCC provides through an application called RightSphere, which allows businesses to organize and manage all their rights assets in a single point and makes them available on the users' desktops.
- So when a company employee clicks on the RightSphere button on their browser, RightSphere identifies the content that they have on their screens at that moment, and instantly tells the user what they can do with that content in a user-friendly, understandable language.
- And when the rights that the user needs are not included in the licenses that their company has, then RightSphere allows the user to initiate on the spot an online licensing transaction.
- On top of this product of ours, RightSphere, CCC has applied the same concept through partnerships with other organizations which have added our rights licensing functionality to their solutions.
- We have now this kind of integration partnerships with more than 20 content aggregators, library and collaboration software vendors, and suppliers of course packs and course materials, like OCLC, KnoedgWire in Japan, and PubGet.
- And what these partners do is they allow the thousands of users of their applications to look up rights information and clear permissions from CCC's extensive database –and to do it without leaving those applications.

5. Central licensing hub: Copyright.com

- Finally, the 3rd online tool developed by CCC that I want to give you as an example is our own website, copyright.com, which serves as a central licensing hub where all the rights that we manage are surfaced and available and where content users can operate and transact with our systems.

- At copyright.com:

- . Anyone can purchase online our pay per use licenses.

- . And users of our annual, repertory licenses can check if the specific title and type of use that they need are covered under their license with us.

- It was back in the 1990's when CCC built copyright.com, which was at the time one of the first websites on which you could transact purchases. Today copyright.com has become a site of reference on copyright matters for many people. It currently has over 1 million visitors annually and a page rank of 8.

6. Lessons learned / final points

- And now, just to end, my conclusions. Three conclusions:

- . First: well-structured, scalable and robust rights information systems are critical, and building them is a hard, complex task. It requires highly specialized expertise, sustained efforts over time, and continuous investments.

- . Second: It is crucial to engage in a constant listening exercise with rightholders and users, to fully understand their rights clearance processes and their business rules and practices down to the tiniest levels of detail and granularity. CCC has done and continues to do this as way to inform the development of our rights infrastructure and our online services.

- . And my third conclusion is that on top of a rights management system, you also need a vision and the right business models. In our case, our vision and our goal have always been to make copyright licensing for users as simple as possible, sparing them any avoidable complexities. We are the ones who deal with the complexities so that users can have easy and efficient licensing experiences.