

WIPO Conversation on Intellectual Property and Frontier Technology

Title: AI and IP: Infrastructure for right holders and innovation.

Country: Nigeria

Intervener: Esther Bolanle Ekundayo (PhD Researcher at the University of Central Lancashire and Partner – OluShodimu & Co).

Considering the ongoing global technological advancements, it is essential to identify and address issues of critical importance to the Nigerian copyright framework and other copyright systems around the world. Interoperability enables seamless communication and exchange of data across various platforms (registries, licensing agencies and enforcement bodies) in a copyright system. It is essential for the efficient management of the rights of creators and right holders as it may help simplify licensing by connecting digital platforms, copyright databases and Collective Management Organisations (CMOs). Thus, facilitating seamless user permissions and prompt remuneration for creators. It may further provide a mechanism for securing authors' consent prior to training Artificial Intelligence (AI) systems.

The Nigerian traditional copyright framework is made up of the regulatory, technological and operational systems like the laws, copyright offices, enforcement mechanisms, CMOs and legal professionals, amongst others. Each plays a significant role in the administration and implementation of copyright law in Nigeria. However, like any other nation, the Nigerian copyright framework is bound to encounter challenges such as enforcement and interoperability in the evolving world of technology like AI/gen-AI.

Although AI and Intellectual Property (IP) practices are still developing as there are no AI laws yet, there are some emerging trends towards digitalisation and the use of AI to encourage interoperability in Nigeria. The National Information Technology Development Agency (NITDA) which regulates IT in Nigeria has developed an AI policy and one of its strategies is

to develop AI quality standards to ensure interoperability between AI systems as well as the public and private sectors. Similarly, NITDA developed the Nigerian e-Government Interoperability Framework (Ne-GIF) to ensure interoperability of e-government systems to support Ministries, Departments and Agencies by providing tools, specifications and guidelines. This framework recommends that NITDA works with the Nigerian Copyright Commission (the “**Commission**”), the Intellectual Property Institute, the Copyright Society of Nigeria and the Nigerian chapter of WIPO to achieve harmonisation of intellectual property rights and provide incentives to creators. One of such strategies include working with the institutions to design and determine data formats and interchange across all levels of governments and agencies.

Additionally, the Copyright Act of 2022 provides a regulatory guidance in this regard. Although registering a copyright work is not a formal requirement for copyright eligibility, part of the functions of the Commission under the Act is to create and maintain a register and database relating to copyright works. The Commission has therefore taken steps to digitise copyright, thereby aiding the process of registration and enforcement of copyright. The Act further empowers the Commission to issue take down notices and block access to infringing websites. The Commission therefore acts in collaboration with internet service providers (ISPs) and individual creators to ensure proper enforcement.

Additionally, CMOs are encouraged under the Nigerian draft IP policy of 2022, to use appropriate and adequate technology for their operation to enhance efficiency. Hence, CMOs, such as the Musical Copyright Society Nigeria (MCSN) and the Audio Visual Rights Society (AVRS) ensure the use of encryptions (a DRM measure) to monitor content and prevent unauthorised downloads on platforms like Spotify, Netflix, Amazon Prime Video and YouTube. Hence, aiding licensing and enforcement of copyright.

Lastly, the Director of WIPO Nigeria, Mr Tobi Moody speaking on the IP and Copyright infrastructure in Nigeria in March 2025, discussed the Nigerian involvement with WIPO Connect, an IT based solution that supports CMOs who are struggling to manage their structures internally as well as engaging with other CMOs to share their data and documentation. WIPO Connect serves to protect the interests of creators and right holders. Similarly, it facilitates cooperation between CMOs of several countries which is another means of encouraging interoperability between nations as well as fostering international collaborations.

Acknowledging that this remains a continuous development, it is our position that AI can contribute to enhance interoperability in our copyright system, notwithstanding its associated risks. Therefore, Nigeria is committed to developing a resilient infrastructure for a digitally-oriented copyright system which can promote its indigenous abilities and preserve the interests of its creators and right holders.

References

The Copyright Act, 2022, Nigeria.

National Artificial Intelligence Strategies, 2024.

National Intellectual Property Policy and Strategy.

Guidelines for Nigerian Content Development in Information and Communication Technology (ICT).