

**WIPO Conference on Copyright Documentation and Infrastructure
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**PANEL I: AN OVERVIEW OF PUBLIC REGISTRATION AND LEGAL
DEPOSIT SYSTEM IN GHANA**

Public registration and legal deposit system in Ghana dates back to 1961 when the Book and Newspaper Act was passed.

The legal Regime:

The public registration and legal deposit system in Ghana is governed by three (3) legislations namely:

1. Book and Newspaper Registration Act 1961 (Act 73)
2. Public Records and Archives Administration Act, 1997 (Act 535) and
3. The Copyright Act, 2005 (Act 690).

The legislations contain specific provisions for public registration and legal deposits.

National Registries:

The Book and Newspaper Registration Act provides for the registration of all books published in Ghana. Section 1 of the Act makes it mandatory for a printer of a book to deposit copies with specified institutions (i.e. the Ghana Library Board, the Registrar- General's Department, the University of Ghana, among others) within one (1) month after the day on which the book is taken out of the press. The deposit must be accompanied by a memorandum containing particulars such as the title of the book, names of the author, translator, editor, the subject matter of the book, etc. and the name and residence of the proprietor of the copyright or a portion of the copyright.

Currently, it is the George Padmore Library which acts as the National Agency for the registration of published books.

The published books, when submitted, become part of the Ghana National Bibliography

This registration and deposit system which pertains to works of private individuals and entities is generally complied with.

The Public Records and Archives Act as the name connotes, provides for the administration of public records. Section 20 of the Act gives the Director of the Public Records and Archives Department (PRAAD) the power to acquire a copy of a private recording which is of permanent value for preservation in the National Archives.

Section 20(2) further gives the Director the power to establish a register of private records in the Republic. PRAAD has a registry for private records but very few registration have been made and are mostly from cooperate institutions. This may be due to the fact that not many people are aware of this provision.

The Copyright Registry

Section 39 of the Ghana Copyright Act 2005, (Act 690) provides for a voluntary registration system in the Copyright Office.

The purposes of the registration are as follows:

- (a) To maintain a record of works*
- (b) To publicise the rights of the owners, and*
- (c) To give evidence of the ownership and authentication of intellectual property.*

Registration of copyright has become quite popular in Ghana. The Copyright Office registry, registers both copyright protected works and related rights. The office has since 1998 registered over **12,000** works and receives on the average, eight (8) applications daily in its Accra office. Every application is accompanied by two (2) deposits of the work. Storage and preservation of the deposits are gradually becoming major challenges to the office.

The registration system until August, 2011 was manual and files were in paper format. The system has now been automated with the assistance of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and the office is in the process of creating an electronic database for the registered works. The electronic database when completed will facilitate search and enable the office to provide users with adequate and accurate information on registered works.

Conclusion

The benefits of copyright registration are enormous and cannot be overemphasized. The benefits however cannot be realized where national registries lack adequate infrastructure.

It is gratifying that the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) is undertaking projects and programs in that direction to provide technical support to member states.

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