

Digital Britain
Inconference (London):
Session report

Your name: Bill Thompson

Name of session: Rights

Key questions considered:

1. The balance between rights holders desires for complete control and the wider public interest
2. The nature and importance of the public domain

Action points that could be included in the Digital Britain final report:

1. There is scope for negotiation between rights-holders and the general public over extensions to copyright law and what is offered in return. For example, in return for higher penalties or criminal prosecution of serious commercial infringers we could ask for compulsory labelling of DRM, a service-level agreement allowing for refunds if eg capabilities are removed from devices and an undertaking to respect copyright law over contract provisions
2. The public domain will become increasingly important as digital tools allow more creative expression to be shared. There should be an undertaking from government that no laws will be passed which remove material from the public domain.
3. In order to enhance the public domain provision should be made to remove Crown and Parliamentary Copyright and place material created with public funding in the public domain
4. Just as economic impact assessments of policies are prepared as part of the legislative process, we should have public impact assessments that look at the impact of proposed law on the creative use of the internet, freedom of access to material and the long term effect on the creative industries

How might these proposals be funded?

The proposals made here should be revenue neutral as they do not require any direct investment, and indeed if the economic benefits of the sharing culture are taken into account then the negotiation between rights holders and the public could be positive.