

Creative Economy Forum: Press Release

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Call for Office of Intellectual Property (OfIP): A New Body to Regulate Intellectual Property

Britain should set up a new body to regulate intellectual property in the public interest, according to the Creative Economy Forum.

The body should be set up by statute and modelled on industry regulators such as OfCom. Its task would be to ensure intellectual property laws serve the public interest by encouraging more creativity and innovation. It would follow the principles of the RSA Adelphi Charter on Creativity, Innovation and Intellectual Property.

“There is an urgent need for a new body to provide government with independent, expert, policy-oriented research,” said John Howkins, Director of the Creative Economy Forum

“We propose the government restructure the Patent Office as a statutory body with explicit public interest responsibilities. It would function as a regulatory body. One model is Ofcom, which regulates the communications industries. The new Office of Intellectual Property (OfIP) would take on all the Patent Office’s existing powers and responsibilities but operate within a policy framework shaped by the public interest. Government would have to account for the public interest instead of a narrow business focus as now.

The Forum also said there would be benefits in a body to provide research-based advice. One model is the DTI’s defunct Intellectual Property Advisory Committee (IPAC). IPAC should be re-launched and given real independence, real resources and a remit throughout Whitehall. It should have an independent chair (unlike IPAC) and its own secretariat. Its members should be drawn from the public, users and consumers as well rights-holders.

Further information can be found in, ‘Who Owns the Law?’ submitted to the Treasury Gowers Review of intellectual property.

Notes

1. John Howkins was Director of the RSA Adelphi Charter on Creativity, Innovation and Intellectual Property (www.adelphicharter.org). He devised the London Intellectual Property Advisory Service which the London Development Agency launched as 'Own It'. He is a Director of HandMade Films plc. He is the author of 'The Creative Economy'. He is a Governor of the London Film School, a Visiting Professor at Lincoln University and Vice Dean, Shanghai School of Creativity.
2. The report, 'Who Owns the Law?' was supported by a generous grant by the Joseph Rowntree Reform Trust.
3. Information about the RSA Adelphi Charter can be found at www.adelphicharter.org.
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