

TOWARDS THE CREATION OF A COMMON INFORMATION ENVIRONMENT

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A growing body of electronic content (e-content) is made available online by organisations in different sectors, both to their respective communities and to the general public. Such e-content covers a variety of areas ranging from health, education and museums to archives, research and public libraries. This trend of making available online and increasing access to e-content faces two significant challenges: First, the proliferation and diversification of content makes its identification and contextualisation increasingly difficult for the user; and second, e-Content initiatives are often fragmented and uncoordinated, thus significantly limiting the possibilities of realising the potential of online content for the citizen. In addition the long term sustainability of such initiatives is under increasing stress. The current study suggests a strategy for dealing with the aforementioned problems through the creation of a common information environment. When the digitisation and dissemination of digital born or digitised content is the result of publicly funded programmes, there is the possibility of forming national or regional policies aiming at the maximisation of the benefits from the relevant IPR management. This study presents a series of models of IPR management that aims at the maximisation of value through the management of flows of IPRs and e-content. Three main models are presented (star-shaped, clean hands and hybrid) as metaphors describing different modes of IPR management. These models are the outcome of a series of seven in depth studies that took place in the UK in 2009. It presents a series of proposals for funding bodies, research, education and memory institutions and policy makers. The key conclusion from this study is that mixed open content and all right reserved models are ideal for the maximisation of the benefits for the individual and the public sector. Finally, the paper suggests that the creation of a common information environment where the flow and reuse of e-content occurs in a frictionless fashion is an objective that is both attainable and can provide a number of benefits for all the involved stakeholders.

Keywords: IPR management, IPR risk management, Open Access, Creative Commons, Mixed models, Commons Based Peer Production, value types, flows of rights, value and content, memory institutions, e-content, e-research.