

Don't re-copyright the internet for news publishers: support creativity and innovation instead

We, startups, digital entrepreneurs, and associations are concerned with the new proposals of the European Commission to create a broad new quasi-copyright for the benefit of news publishers.

We have witnessed first hand the negative impact of such proposals in Spain and in Germany, which have been universally condemned. We have seen it weaken Europe's potential for digital innovation as startups in those markets closed or moved to other activities or other locations. We do not have resources to fight copyright battles and hire armies of lawyers. New legal risks impact our bottom line directly, drying up our sources of funding.

We are driven by the desire to innovate, create and to make the world a better place. As innovators and creators, and often owners of copyright ourselves, we believe we should have a say in how copyright can work best for our community.

We do understand that the EU may consider different rights to those adopted in Germany and Spain. But we do not believe that such a fundamentally flawed starting point should, or can be, improved upon.

New rules for the benefit of news publishers are a step back from a forward looking, innovation friendly copyright regime. They pitch technology and innovation against creativity. They attempt to roll back the foundational elements of the internet. They reveal a lack of understanding of how creativity works in the digital environment.

The idea that everything published in writing on the internet should get an additional, new set of quasi-copyright, is mind-boggling. It amounts to copyrighting the entire internet. Anew. It promises a new wave of legal uncertainty, complexity and red-tape for all the businesses, large and small, that thrive to harness the power of digital for social and economic betterment.

We strongly oppose such a step and aspire to have a say in a more progressive, future looking copyright that recognises us as key drivers of a creative, innovative economy.

Yours sincerely,

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