USER-GENERATED CONTENT
PRESS PUBLISHERS ENGAGING WITH THEIR READERS

Background

User Generated Content (UGC) can be many things as regards different creative sectors. This document concerns UGC from the perspective of the press publishing sector developed for the European Commission initiative Licences for Europe (http://ec.europa.eu/licences-for-europe-dialogue), during which press publishers used the opportunity to consolidate and share best practices which already exist in this field, along with some new initiatives, with other stakeholders and representatives from the European Commission.

Both in response to and in some cases in anticipation of their readers' needs, press publishers are heavily investing money, time and resources in digital innovation so that consumers are today able to read and interact with their trusted, professional content at any time of the day. As a result the press is now available on all platforms and more interactive than ever before.

Press publishers recognise and welcome that press publishing is a two-way dialogue in today's digital environment. UGC in the press-publishing sector concerns on the one hand what users do with publishers' content and on the other how publishers then choose to interact with that content. In summary:

Publishers choose to share professional content with their readers, in order that they may share it with others, for example by allowing links to articles to be shared via social media.

Readers choose to share content with publishers, in order that they can contribute to democratic debate, for example, by providing text, photographs and video via publishers' websites or applications on various devices in relation to news events.

In the digital environment, press publishers want users to engage with professionally produced content in ways that were not previously possible, recognising the richness and depth of debate that can arise from this approach. An increasing number of newspapers and magazines actively encourage this dynamic interaction with the users, to the benefit of both parties.

UGC has proven to be truly helpful in providing spontaneous material and feedback from the public's perspective in addition to professionally produced journalistic content, which is trusted by its readers. This is particularly the

case for live events and certainly in those rare and more extreme situations where access of journalists has been restricted.

With greater and more integrated use of UGC in mind, many publishers have redesigned their digital layouts in order to meet the expectations of the public and increase traffic, for instance by giving prominence to live blogging or other ways of the public engaging with their newspaper or magazine. Citizen participation supported by press publishers creates a valuable societal dynamic and the collaboration between UGC and quality professional journalism represents a new, and fascinating chapter for publishing and journalism.

How does it work in practice?

It is clear from the above that engaging with UGC in some capacity is now part of the daily business of publishing for most organisations, with this two-way dialogue being beneficial for both publishers and users. By facilitating easier access to their content for users, this allows publishers to enjoy much closer contact with their readership.

Specifically press publishers are keen to facilitate and promote users' access to content, participation and interaction by adopting tools to provide comments, upload photos, and share links in social media and elsewhere. This approach is very much at the heart of the press in today's digital environment. For example, press publishers are increasingly choosing to provide "share" & "recommend" buttons and encourage users to share professional press content with others, with a variety of new platforms offering easy ways of doing so. They clear, as required, rights relating to the various contributors to their content in order to enable such use by users. This approach to sharing selected content means that publishers can better understand how far articles are being shared and which are the most popular etc., but importantly does not pose a risk to their sustainability as unlimited copying and pasting of all their content for sharing would do.

On the other hand, where users want to submit content to publishers for publication, publishers provide for terms and conditions, which set out the uses the publishers may undertake with the shared content, should they choose to provide their content. Publishers are increasingly promoting awareness of such terms and conditions.

European users generally do not have a high level of awareness of the value or role of copyright and other intellectual property rights, as noted by the European Commission's IPR Strategy. Better information for users is an essential factor of a successful IPR strategy. Educational initiatives at European and national level should help to create more awareness of the value of content and promote respect for copyright.

We note with interest the UK IPO's initiative 'IP Equip' which will launch at the end of October 2013 and is aimed at raising awareness for those wishing to use and engage with the intellectual property of others. Enhancing user awareness of the benefits of IPR in terms of investment in high quality content remains one of the top priorities for press publishers. A failure to do so risks the sustainability of a diverse supply of independent press content across Europe. However, this awareness is equally important for users to know how they themselves would benefit from copyright

To our knowledge, no specific problems have been raised by users in the context of being refused permission to use press publishers' content for UGC. In fact, we understand that press publishers contacted by users who wish to use their content typically provide licences for use of the content often for free, as long as it is not for commercial exploitation. In the digital environment, press publishers have however started using more straight forward digital solutions to share their content legally and as widely as possible[1].

Furthermore, technology is being further developed to facilitate click-through licensing solutions for users. In particular, a cross-media, multinational coalition of more than 40 partners – including press publishers - from the media and creative industries, including representatives of authors and artists, was launched in 2011 to work together with their standards bodies to establish automated and semi-automated communications, based on identifiers and interoperable metadata standards, between rightsholders and those who wish to use content.[2] A pilot project, the RDI, supported by the European Commission is now underway to further develop the project. Similarly any Web user creating new content, whether it involves re-use of existing content or not, should be able simply to add such identifiers to enable them to better protect and potentially monetise their content[3].

Media literacy skills for users can be enhanced by clear information provided to them by press publishers in easy-to-find and easy-to-understand layman's terms about what is permitted or not. Such information is essential to foster lawful sharing and re-use of media content. Regarding young users, press publishers' aim to cultivate an understanding of the role of press in the community and the value of professional press content. A special focus on young users, illustrated by, for example, offers of preferential rates, is designed to stimulate young people's appetite for quality information and analysis.

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[1] These solutions include for example the Press Database and Licensing Network (PDLN) (see http://www.pdln.info), as well as the Copyright Clearance Centre (CCC) (see http://www.copyright.com/rightsphere), both of which were presented during the L4E process.
[2] The Linked Content Coalition (LCC): see http://www.linkedcontentcoalition.org
[3] See presentation on "Infrastructure developments for the declaration and access to rights for all content types" Godfrey Rust, Linked Content Coalition http://ec.europa.eu/licences-for-europe-dialogue/en/content/wg2-presentations-6th-meeting-25-october

DECLARATION ON IMPROVING THE USER EXPERIENCE

Press publishers are committed to – and continue to be committed to - engaging with readers and improving the user experience, including via the uptake of User Generated Content (UGC) in their online publications and services, giving a voice to users as well as enhancing their professional content offering. This is very much in the interests of both publishers and users alike.

In this regard, the undersigned European associations representing press publishers across Europe, declare the importance of the following:

1. **Improving the user experience and involvement**

- Publishers across Europe have enhanced and improved the user experience for European citizens by providing easy access to and portability of content across different platforms, while also aiming to facilitate opportunities for users in a sharing culture.

- Press publishers across Europe are increasingly using UGC in their online publications, applications and other services and thereby allowing users to contribute to news and other press content.

2. **Improving information about both what users can do with press publishers' content and what press publishers can do with users' content**

- Press publishers in Europe are already providing simple information in layman's language in clearly signposted terms and conditions as regards what users can do with press publishers' content and what press publishers can do with content submitted by users.

- This approach is already widely adopted by press publishers across Europe with a view to ensuring that terms and conditions are visible, easily readable and accessible in relation to press publishers' various digital offerings.

- This includes publishers carrying easily recognisable signs on their websites, applications and other services, which indicate the possibilities for users to share and re-use content, and which also - in an increasing amount of cases - link through to guidance on the different possibilities for users to re-use content.

3. Promoting education about intellectual property rights (IPR)

- Publishers are increasingly involved in initiatives enhancing user awareness of the importance and benefits of copyright and other IPR in terms of investment and availability of professional content, as well as awareness of what is at stake if it is not respected. This awareness is equally important for users to know how to benefit from copyright protection for their own newly created works.

- We welcome and support initiatives to raise awareness and explain better the rightful use and accessibility of press publishers' content to the users and encourage such initiatives to be more widely adopted across Europe. Particular attention should be focused on raising awareness among young people, who are natives of the sharing culture, to enable them to understand what is at stake in copyright and other IPR.

4. Promoting awareness of the technological possibilities to better identify and protect content

- We welcome initiatives increasing the awareness about the technological possibilities to better identify and protect all content, whether by publishers or users, in the digital environment.

- We welcome the development of technologies that enable those users creating content (including UGC) to have the ability to identify such content in the digital environment to enable them to subsequently further protect and potentially monetise their content.

- We encourage the promotion of the technological possibilities available to better identify and protect content, in order that both publishers and users are able to benefit.

5. Sharing best practices across the sector

- Press publishers across Europe are continuously consolidating and sharing best practices across the sector to the benefit of both press publishers and their users all across Europe.

Signatories

Angela Mills-Wade
Executive Director
European Publishers Council (EPC)
Contact: Ann Becker: ann.becker@epceurope.eu

Francine Cunningham
Executive Director
European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA)
Contact: Martin Kala: martin.kala@enpa.be

Max von Abendroth
Executive Director
European Magazine Media Association (EMMA)
Contact: Catherine Starkie: catherine.starkie@magazinemedia.eu

About EPC
The European Publishers Council (EPC) brings together 26 Chairmen and CEOs of Europe's leading media groups representing companies with newspapers, magazines, online publishing, journals, databases, books and broadcasting. We communicate with Europe's legislators on issues that affect freedom of expression, media diversity, democracy and the health and viability of media in the EU.

About ENPA
European Newspaper Publishers' Association (ENPA) is an international non-profit organisation representing publishers of newspapers and news media on all platforms. ENPA has 31 member associations across many EU Member States, plus Norway, Switzerland and Serbia. Together our members represent over 5,200 national, regional and local newspaper titles, published on both print and digital platforms.

About EMMA
EMMA, the European Magazine Media Association, is the unique and complete representation of Europe's magazine media, which is today enjoyed by millions of consumers on various platforms, encompassing both paper and digital formats. EMMA represents 15,000 publishing houses, publishing 50,000 magazine titles across Europe in print and digital. EMMA members comprise 24 national associations, 5 international associations, and 23 corporate members.