

Hamburg Declaration regarding intellectual property rights

The Internet offers immense opportunities to professional journalism – but only if the basis for profitability remains secure throughout the digital channels of distribution. This is currently not the case.

Numerous providers are using the work of authors, publishers and broadcasters without paying for it. Over the long term, this threatens the production of high-quality content and the existence of independent journalism.

For this reason, we advocate strongly urgent improvements in the protection of intellectual property on the Internet.

Universal access to websites does not necessarily mean access at no cost. We disagree with those who maintain that freedom of information is only established when everything is available at no cost.

Universal access to our services should be available, but going forward we no longer wish to be forced to give away property without having granted permission.

We therefore welcome the growing resolve of federal and state governments all over the world to continue to support the protection of the rights of authors, publishers and broadcasters on the Internet.

There should be no parts of the Internet where laws do not apply. Legislators and governments at the national and international level should protect more effectively the intellectual creation of value by authors, publishers and broadcasters. Unauthorized use of intellectual property must remain prohibited whatever the means of distribution.

Ultimately, the fundamental principle that no democracy can thrive without independent journalism must also apply to the World Wide Web.

Berlin, June 26th 2009