

Copyright Is for Everyone

Why a Modern Society Needs a WIPO Instrument for Libraries and Archives

Digital technology has changed the world. Outdated laws keep people and societies from benefiting. Information that enriches our lives—like news, scientific research, cultural works, and government services—is increasingly available only in electronic form. New ways to learn and communicate online have developed rapidly, but the laws that govern how digital information is used and shared have not kept pace.

Libraries and archives provide access to information in whatever form it takes, without profit or prejudice. Copyright laws are meant to balance the public interest in accessing information with the rights of authors, artists, and publishers. In some countries, copyright laws include provisions so libraries and archives can provide public access to the world’s knowledge—but in many countries, these exceptions apply only to resources that exist in traditional formats. In fact, outdated copyright laws increasingly prevent libraries and archives from performing their most basic functions, simply because resources are now digital.

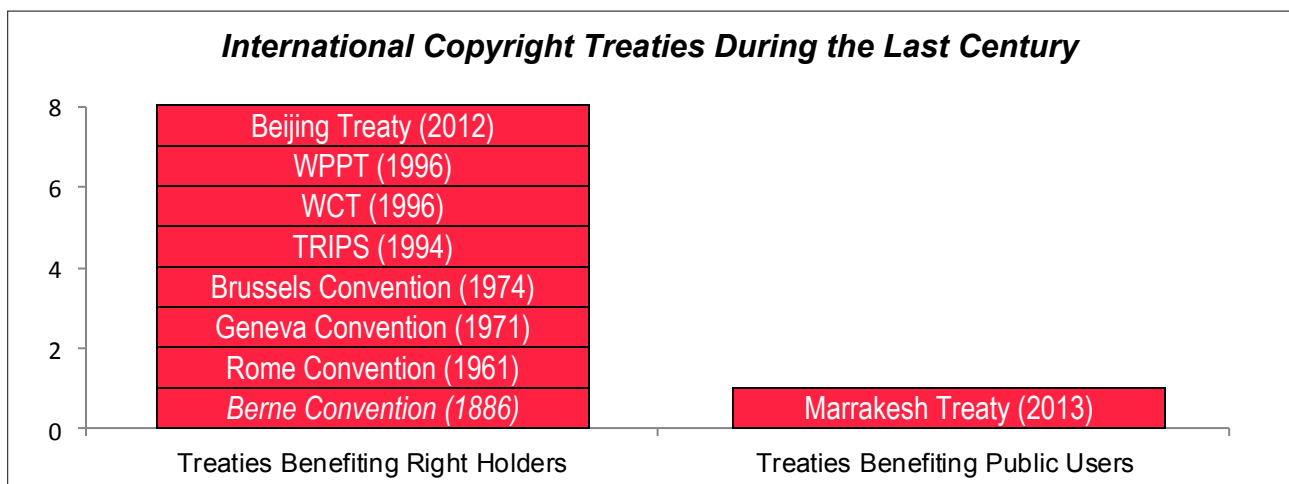
Libraries and archives serve the public by:

- Promoting literacy
- Facilitating education and research
- Fueling creativity and innovation
- Closing gaps in access to information
- Connecting people to essential public services and job prospects
- Safeguarding history and culture
- Educating about copyright

As rules in favor of copyright holders have increased through binding global treaties, rules for libraries and archives that enable access to information have stayed frozen.

The result is a broken copyright system that:

- Deepens inequalities in public knowledge and skills
- Creates permanent holes in the historical record
- Prevents information created today from being available for future generations



Information and opportunity are inseparable. Protecting universal access to opportunity starts with protecting access to the information available in libraries and archives. To support equality in access to information and opportunity, please join us in supporting an international copyright instrument for libraries and archives.

How a WIPO Instrument for Libraries and Archives Would Bring Copyright Laws into the Digital Age

- **Establish basic international standards** | Libraries and archives operate under a patchwork system of copyright laws that vary greatly from one country to another. In some countries, the unique role of libraries and archives is not recognized at all. These contradictory policies create legal ambiguity and promote disparities in access to information between rich and poor nations. This instrument would introduce basic global standards for the functions of libraries and archives, and permit these institutions to cooperate across borders.
- **Ensure equal treatment of digital resources** | Commercial publishers often impose licensing rules and limits on digital materials that do not apply to the same resources in print format. These restrictions can take away freedoms in copyright law given to libraries and archives, by imposing digital “locks” or fees on certain uses of materials that would otherwise be free. This instrument would ensure that copyright laws that protect the use of print materials in libraries and archives also apply to digital materials.
- **Protect the ability to acquire and lend digital collections** | The future is digital. Yet some libraries are legally prevented from even purchasing e-books from publishers for their lending collections. This instrument would make sure that libraries are not refused the opportunity to buy or lend commercially available e-books.
- **Safeguard our cultural and scientific heritage** | The information we create or discover today becomes the collective knowledge of future generations. But in many parts of the world, the documents that make up this human heritage are disappearing because libraries and archives are legally prevented from preserving them digitally. This instrument would ensure that libraries and archives can legally save all materials, whether they were created on paper or “born” digital.
- **Unlock “orphan works”** | Tens of millions of works of high historic and educational value are held in the collections of libraries and archives, but are unavailable to the public because the author or copyright-holder cannot be identified or found. This instrument would empower libraries and archives to make these orphan works available for socially beneficial purposes like public research.



Together we can correct the global copyright imbalance that prevents libraries and archives from providing a secure future for access to knowledge for all.

For more information about the proposed WIPO instrument on libraries and archives and how you can support it, visit www.ifla.org/copyright-tlib or contact Ellen Broad, Manager, Digital Policy & Projects, IFLA at ellen.broad@ifla.org.