The Rate for the Job

Strategic patience at WIPO

THERE WERE interesting developments for authors at the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva in the first week of May. Its Standing Committee on Copyright and related Rights was given a preview of a report on the future of copyright and authors’ rights in the digital age.

Professor Pierre Sirinelli called repeatedly for authors – supporting whose work was the entire point of authors’ rights in the beginning – to be returned to the centre of authors’ rights and copyright law and WIPO’s work.

As the simultaneous translation had it, “if we lose sight of the authors, the most important people in the construction of copyright, we might as well say that they play only one role: to announce the date of their death” to determine when corporate copyright expires.

Sirinelli mentioned the problem that internet companies are immune to action over their use of content. “They announce: ‘I don’t have to dis- cover this with you because I am not responsible, but because I’m such a good person I’ll discuss it, but because I am not responsible I will offer you a pittance.’”

He discussed the need for transparency in contracts, and to look at the “value chain” from companies’ income to authors’ pockets.

That last point received strong support from the European Union, whose Commission is promoting measures demanding transparency in a Draft Directive (see the February Freelance). Nearly 1000 amendments to the draft have been put down in the European Parliament: we’re wading through them.

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For a full report – including debates on use of your work by libraries, archives, educational and research institutions and more – see www.londonfreelance.org/ fl/1705wipo.html

ALCS – record payout for re-use of our work?

THE ANNUAL season of ALCS “free money” freelance thrills has passed and the Freelance brings you tidings of a possible new all-time individual record take – to encourage you to join ALCS and claim what’s yours in April 2018.

For new readers, ALCS (the Authors’ Licensing and Collecting Service) is a collecting society which distributes “secondary rights” income, still mainly from photocopying licences, to magazine, journal and non-fiction book author freelances.

Millions are distributed among many, and hundreds get hundreds and quite a few hit low four-figures – which is nice, the more so in these hard times.

But this year intra-freelance gos- sip threw up the highest annual fig- ure LFBs ever heard of. Has anybody ever landed a bigger payout than Freelance X’s £4959.82?

Not fantasy. Mention of it promptly drew Freelance Y to say she got a bit over £4000 last year.

Common denominator: both were in their first year of ALCS membership so had hoovered up a deal of back-pay too.

Worth joining? Not ‘arf! This is where to do it: www.alcs.co.uk/join – go there now!

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What news of DACS payouts can LFB photographers and other visual freelances offer? Any news of big Research freelance copy editor day £120; Metro subbing day (9 hours with one-hour lunch) £100 XXXX; LabourList.org (Labour Party) reporting and subbing day £85 XX; trade news service reporting, news, some features per hour £16.

Words, per 1000: Trade news service interview feature (US 75 cents per word) US$125; Honcho magazine US$500; Construction News interview feature £275; i newspaper 400 words sports news FBI £80 £200; 200-word sports sidebar £30 = £150; Aeon, Creative Com- mons licence to the world… £160; Time Inc specialist mag 500 words @ £75 = £150 XXX; Canadian Jewish News 800 words @ $150 Canadian = £106 X; The Nightwatchman (crick- et quarterly) “didn’t realise until too late” the rate was… £0 XXXX.

Words, other: Pro Sound News Europe,1500-word report all rights, no expenses £300; 500 words £100, 300 words £75 XXX; Scottish Sun online copy (length!) £35 XXX(?).