

National Policy Convening

On April 12–13, 2016, the ALA Washington Office held its first National Policy Convening to explore national policy opportunities for libraries to pursue focusing on priorities for the next administration. “Youth Engagement with Technology” explored ways that libraries can help advance the abilities of our nation’s young people to explore, design, and create with technologies central to the success of the digital economy and society.

“Advancing Economic Opportunities in Communities” considered ways that libraries can continue to support workforce development and address problems associated with the economic divide. Speakers included experts from across the educational, commercial, and governmental policy spectrums including U.S. Small Business Administration, National League of Cities, the Aspen Institute, and the Consumer Technology Association.

A third panel, “Future Directions for the Library of Congress” considered priorities for the library given the retirement of James Billington, the Librarian of Congress since the Reagan years, and the recent nomination of Carla Hayden as his successor.

Speakers included Robert Darnton, Carl H. Pforzheimer university professor and university librarian, emeritus, Harvard University; Katie Oyama, senior policy counsel, Google, Inc.; and Sascha Meinrath, Palmer chair in Telecommunications, The Pennsylvania State University.

Conversation focused on the direction of the U.S. Copyright Office and a renewed consideration of the proper balance between the information rights of the public and the interests of rights holders. The panel discussed the need for a robust and complete database of copyright registrations to enable effective licensing transactions and increase

competitiveness, a plan for deposit of digital works, and leadership in the open access movement including support of the Fair Access to Science and Technology Research Act.

U.S. Copyright Office Notice of Inquiries

The Library Copyright Alliance (LCA) contributed comments to two Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA) increasingly problematic provisions. The anticircumvention provision of the DMCA requires that the Copyright Office oversee a triennial review to identify when digital rights management technologies can be hacked to make lawful uses of digital works. The review is a complex, time-consuming determination, requiring legal analysis and increasingly more expertise on technological tools and software.

During the last review in 2015, the Internet of Things became enmeshed in the rule-making, since many tangible products now operate via software protected by copyright. Farmers could no longer repair their own tractors because to do so would involve circumventing software. Researchers studying car emission standards found themselves embroiled in copyright issues since digital technologies operate emission controls. LCA argued that hard fought exemptions should remain permanent rather than expire every three years, only to be requested again.

Public comments were also requested on the notice and takedown provision of Section 512. Online service providers, including libraries and universities that offer Internet services, are protected from liability when third parties using network service allegedly infringe copyright. While LCA supports the provision, the organization argued that notices filed be complete, accurate and understandable and that rights holders consider fair use before filing frivolous notices. Comments are available at the librarycopyrightalliance.org website. *zz*

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