

5 Essential Actions for Publishers

Better Monetization of Content via Copyright

Courtesy of **OUTSELL** 

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publishing and information industries*

Per a web-based survey conducted in September 2009, Outsell (www.outsellinc.com) observed a significant increase in the amount of content being shared, as well as mixed progress in knowledge workers' actions regarding copyright. The net result is that there is a lost revenue opportunity to publishers, despite awareness and attention to the issue of copyright compliance. Conversely, the actions many publishers take today actually help to enable violations.

So, while fingers can be pointed in many directions regarding the state of content creators in the information ecosystem, it is important to recognize that some responsibility rests with the publishers themselves. Accordingly, Outsell has offered five recommended actions for publishers to better monetize their content via copyright.

1. Change Mindset

Content can be free without ceding all rights. Somewhere, the idea of allowing free online access became equated with free online distribution and re-use. While most publishers have abandoned the practice of enabling full articles to be sent via e-mail and instead allow just relying on a snippet of text with a link, many are still allowing copies to be printed without an ad. Further, very few content providers take advantage of a reader's use of sharing tools to remind them of reuse rights. Publishers need to demonstrate the importance of this concept by making it more prominent if they are to expect their readers to do the same. Conversely, why fear discouraging readers if those readers have no way of being monetized?

2. Deploy Tools Everywhere

Given the ease of implementing article tools that efficiently engage the reader to respect copyright, it is surprising – if not shocking – that there are publishers that still do not deploy them today. Similarly, publishers should carefully examine whether a decision not to participate in an umbrella license agreement is wise. For example, publishers of high-end content targeting a specific market may see that content distributed outside that market without remuneration paid. If the relative value of the content in these adjacent markets does not exceed its price, it's unlikely a direct secondary sale will occur.

3. Focus On Keeping It Simple

The process of understanding and reviewing rights should initiate with every share. But the best designed tools will have limited impact if they require a great deal of effort on behalf of the user. Anyone looking to secure rights should not have to do more than click on a highly visible link to get the process in motion. Once started, it should be intuitive, and easy, and of limited risk. For example, why not offer a money- back guarantee for anyone who purchases reprint rights only to discover the rights to do so were already secured elsewhere in the firm.

4. Get Ahead of the Untethered Web

With the explosive growth of smart phones, the fast emergence of e-readers, and now the recent unveiling of promising tablets, a consumer's ability to access digital content away from their desk is rapidly expanding. Now is the time to develop applications and approaches for serving content to these new devices without ceding control over content or monetization, as previously happened with the tethered Web.

5. Eliminate Unnecessary Speed Bumps

While digital rights management (DRM) systems have their place in protecting specialized high-value, proprietary content, they should not be overused. Content that has broad appeal but lower uniqueness is better monetized by enabling broad readership – but while maintaining an eye on monitoring and monetizing this activity. Let subscribers forward articles with advertisements or links to full-text articles. Such activity will build good will for your product and a pipeline of new customers as well.

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