



**IPA Congress 2018 Preview
With Michiel Kolman, IPA President**

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KENNEALLY: After an interval of more than a quarter of a century, the International Publishers Association Congress returns to India this year, starting February 10th. In 1992, IPA members arrived in a nation with a developing economy that relied heavily on foreign aid. In 2018, India numbers among the G20 gathering of wealthiest nations in the world and boasts the planet's fastest-growing economy.

Welcome to Copyright Clearance Center's podcast series. I'm Christopher Kenneally for Beyond the Book. As much as India has transformed over the last 25 years, so has publishing. National barriers to the flow of information have largely fallen, while the ubiquity of mobile devices places a virtual global library in nearly every human hand. Yet the core concerns of IPA transcend the day to day and rise to the enduring principles of freedom to publish and respect for copyright.

In an age of fake news, censorship, and piracy, IPA President Michiel Kolman believes that publishers can be stewards of truth and quality. Kolman holds a day job as SVP, senior vice president, information industry relations, and academic ambassador emeritus at Elsevier, and he earned a PhD in astrophysics from Columbia University. He joins me now from his office in Amsterdam. Welcome to Beyond the Book, Dr. Kolman.

KOLMAN: Hi, Chris. It's great to be here on the show.

KENNEALLY: Well, we're looking forward to discussing the upcoming IPA Congress with you and some of the points that are important to both you and to IPA in 2018. We mentioned in the introduction that you are challenging publishers to serve in this age of disinformation as stewards of truth and quality. So my question first off is how well are IPA members responding to that challenge?

KOLMAN: Well, we live in a world, I would say, of alternative facts, so trust in reliable, high-quality information is now even more important than ever before. And it's the publishers around the world that have risen to this challenge and are publishing what I would call trustworthy information, as they have been doing for ages.



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That's true for science publishers, for trade publishers, or educational publishers. It only illustrates the importance of publishing today.

KENNEALLY: Can you point to any specific examples around the world? Because you do plenty of traveling for IPA. Where are publishers making a difference in this age of information uncertainty?

KOLMAN: I would say there are two important areas here. The first one is securing that the information is trustworthy and of high quality, and the second is that the users can find the right information, especially today when there is an overwhelming amount of information available. This is very well illustrated, I would say, in the world of science publishing, where articles are very carefully selected through the peer review process. At Elsevier, for instance, we select one out of three articles submitted through a strict peer review system, and we reject two out of three. Acceptance doesn't mean that the article is in. It is usually then revised and revised again before it goes into the editorial process. So it's all about quality assurance.

And I think publishers are also investing heavily so that you can find the right information and that it's presented in the right way. For instance, if you're a doctor in an emergency room, you have to find exactly the right information to make the key decisions, and publishers are doing that. They're deploying artificial intelligence, for instance, so that crucial information for crucial decisions.

We also see this in the area of educational publishing, so a publisher there providing reliable teaching material that they can significantly support the learning outcomes of students. We can even teach students how to navigate in the new world where informational uncertainty is simply a fact so that they are better prepared for the future to come.

KENNEALLY: So reliability and quality – these are points, as you say, that matter, particularly in the scientific world. I suppose that's a good thought to have in mind when we discuss Sci-Hub, which has become the scourge of scholarly publishers. It makes available millions of scientific papers by bypassing paywalls and other restrictions to access. But apart from the significant damage to publishers' businesses, what are the dangers you see in Sci-Hub?

KOLMAN: Sci-Hub is, of course, an example of theft. It's digital theft, but it's still theft. And it's theft at a grand scale, as you mentioned yourself. It's not the occasional article which is stolen, but it's millions of articles which have been illegally harvested from university systems. I think it undermines the ecosystem of academic publishing, and academic publishing doesn't only support



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communication, but it's closely intertwined with the quality assessment of research institutes, of universities, of individuals, which is used for rankings, for instance. Sci-Hub puts that information system at risk.

It also undermines, I would say, the IT systems at universities, because it's illegally penetrating universities' IT systems and harvesting the information. It also undermines the role, for instance, of the librarian. They are involved in providing legal access to the library user.

And on a more abstract level, I think it's still very much the cause of concern that pirates like Sci-Hub, they create this false impression that the information is simply available for free. They are not a reliable source of information. That was well illustrated last year when the whole of Russia was cut off from Sci-Hub because the Sci-Hub owner was annoyed after someone named a parasite after her. So it's not a reliable source of information. It's certainly not an alternative for open access, either.

KENNEALLY: I particularly like that story, that anecdote regarding the founder of Sci-Hub, because it points to a kind of capriciousness. If people became reliant on Sci-Hub, they could wake up one morning and it could be gone.

KOLMAN: Absolutely. Last year, it was Russia. If she's upset about something happening in the US, does it mean that everybody in the US is cut off? Next it might be France. So absolutely – very unreliable source of information. That would not happen with the science publishers, or any publishers, for that matter.

KENNEALLY: You have said, Dr. Kolman, that copyright is under a coordinated, determined, and well-funded attack, and you weren't referring in that case to piracy, but to powerful technology companies. You say they evangelize around the world for weakening copyright laws. So which countries today face the greatest threats, as IPA sees it?

KOLMAN: Well, it is a global attack on copyright, and it's waging in several countries at the same time. I would really single out here Canada and South Africa, where things are changing dramatically at the moment. But it's also an attack at an international stage – for instance, at WIPO, the World Intellectual Property Organization in Geneva. And the IPA's engaging at national level with interventions, with lobbying with governments, but also at the international level at WIPO in Geneva.



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I think the key message always is that copyright allows us to deliver quality information in a sustainable way. This is because copyright can allow us to make long-term investments in innovation. That's why we support science, we support education, and we support culture as the publishing industry.

KENNEALLY: Is there a special role in this advocacy for copyright that reprographic rights organizations can play? These include Copyright Clearance Center here in the US and Stichting Reprorecht in the Netherlands.

KOLMAN: Absolutely. So the RROs, they play a crucial role here, because they allow publishers to reach a much broader audience than publishers reach through their primary sales channels. It allows our publications to be read in many more classrooms, for instance. And it's done in a way where both the authors and the publishers are reimbursed, and that will allow, of course, publishers to invest some of these incomes in future innovations. That's quite a contrast with the big tech companies. They only strive for free use of content produced by others without any compensation and not even contributing to society, I would say, by paying their fair taxes.

You mentioned the Copyright Clearance Center and Stichting Reprorecht in the Netherlands. They have been also very active in the fight against piracy. Here in the Netherlands, there were some landmark court cases where the internet providers who are kind of supporting piracy were put by the court – were told to stop supporting that.

KENNEALLY: Last November in Brussels, you participated in the European Parliament Science and Technology Options Assessment. It's an annual program, and the focus last year was media in the age of artificial intelligence. You made a point that while tech companies are increasingly acting like publishers – Facebook is becoming like a publisher, if not already is a publisher – publishing companies themselves are becoming more like tech companies. So this results in what you called hybrid organizations, and you urged greater collaboration between publishers and technology companies. What kind of collaboration did you have in mind?

KOLMAN: I think indeed publishers are serving their customers better and better every day by adopting technology solutions, and tech companies are now increasingly forced to take responsibility for the content which is made available on their platforms. I think publishers are outstanding at producing high-quality content. Tech companies excel at providing unparalleled access. So it would be extremely powerful if you could combine these two – the high-quality content on one side and the excellent distribution on the other side.



At the same time, there are principles at stake here. I think the most important one for us is respect for copyright. This is the bedrock of the publishing industry. That should also be fully embraced by technology companies.

KENNEALLY: The other principle that IPA seeks to defend, in addition to copyright, is freedom to publish. In 2018, I have to ask you, as you head into the IPA Congress, are we worse off or better off than at the last IPA Congress two years ago?

KOLMAN: Freedom to publish is together with copyright indeed the core principles of the IPA. I wish I could state here that freedom to publish is improving worldwide, but I'm afraid I cannot be that optimistic. The situation is deteriorating, especially in countries like Turkey, Russia, or China. And even in the US, the president challenged the freedom to publish of a book that was not to his liking.

For us at the IPA, we have the Prix Voltaire, our freedom to publish award, and we have now more and more nominations than ever before. I would say a small light of hope is this renewed appreciation for reliable, high-quality reporting and publishing. So in that sense, that's a positive light here.

KENNEALLY: Well, we certainly share that point – kind of a response to all of the attacks on the freedom to publish and so forth. It has resulted in greater attention to these points that you raise, and we appreciate you doing so today for us on Beyond the Book.

We've been speaking with Michiel Kolman, who is the president of the IPA, the International Publishers Association. He's also senior vice president, information industrial relations and academic ambassador emeritus at Elsevier. He'll be leading the delegation of IPA into New Delhi this week, beginning February 10th, to the biennial International Publishers Association Congress. Michiel Kolman, thank you so much for joining us on Beyond the Book.

KOLMAN: Thank you. I really enjoyed the conversation, Chris.

KENNEALLY: Beyond the Book is produced by Copyright Clearance Center, a global leader in content management, discovery, and document delivery solutions. Through its relationships with those who use and create content, CCC and its subsidiaries RightsDirect and Ixxus drive market-based solutions that accelerate knowledge, power publishing, and advance copyright.



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