The Voice of World Publishing

Benefits of IPA membership

ACCESSIBILITY

The IPA co-founded the Accessible Book Consortium (ABC) with the UN World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), the World Blind Union (WBU), International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) and many other international bodies.

The ABC’s objective is to increase the number of books worldwide in accessible formats, such as braille, audio and large print, and make them available to print disabled people.

The ABC complements the Marrakesh Treaty, which compels WIPO member states to establish a copyright exception for visually impaired people, while allowing cross-border sharing of books in accessible formats.

LITERACY

The ability to read and write is fundamental to education and, under Article 26 of the Universal Declaration on Human Rights, everyone has the right to education.

We support initiatives that promote literacy and reading in ways that help sustainable local publishing industries to grow. Local publishers give local writers a voice and offer their readers, whatever their age, reading material that reflects their reality, their cultural context and their lives.

The IPA encourages literacy campaigns and initiatives that integrate publishers within their local, cultural context, such as UNESCO’s World Book Capital City programme. The IPA was instrumental in initiating the programme, in 1996, and each year takes a leadership role in the selection of the next winning city.

In addition, we lobby lawmakers at all levels to introduce policies that boost literacy and encourage reading. One such line of advocacy is for zero-rated VAT on books. The IPA produces a report annually that monitors the way countries apply VAT to books, and demonstrates the huge societal benefits that the simple removal of this tax can bring.

DELIVERING VALUE

The IPA is lean and efficient, with a small permanent staff at its Geneva headquarters, yet we deliver a wide range of services to our members. Besides what is detailed in this brochure, IPA members come together for the biennial International Publishers Congress, which brings together leading publishers, authors, booksellers and other stakeholders to discuss the major issues affecting global publishing.

We also produce market reports, specially commissioned data and analysis, and our dedicated communications channels provide news and analysis of changes in technical standards and industry policies, as well as information on global trends and innovative business models.

And despite all of this, the majority of our membership fees have not increased since 2012. In fact, in 2015 we reduced most subscription fees, to help our members continue to economize and provide even better value to their publisher members.

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The International Publishers Association (IPA) is a unique alliance of national, regional and international publishers associations, whose goal is to promote the beneficial impact of publishing on all our lives.

The IPA has a dual industry and human rights mandate, devoting equal focus to the protection of copyright and the defence of freedom to publish, wherever either is vulnerable or threatened.

In cooperation with the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) and many international NGOs, the IPA champions the interests of book and journal publishing at national and supranational level.

The IPA also promotes literacy: we champion the benefits of high-quality educational publishing; and, in collaboration with the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA), we help advance the UN Sustainable Development Goals. Accessibility to books for visually impaired and print disabled people is another key area of focus. The IPA co-founded the Accessible Books Consortium (ABC) with WIPO and other major stakeholders.

At the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) in Geneva, the IPA is the first line of defence for global publishing in the supranational IP treaty process. We represent and promote the interests of publishers and the IP industries in key WIPO fora, including the General Assemblies, the Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR), the Committees on Development and Intellectual Property (CDIP), on WIPO Standards (CWS), the Intergovernmental Committee (IGC), and various others.

The IPA pursues similar goals at the World Trade Organization (WTO), the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) and other Geneva-based UN agencies on publisher- and IP-related issues. A vital strand of this work is taking a leading role in forming and coordinating global, multi-stakeholder groups from the IP sphere to present a united front in Geneva and elsewhere.

Freedom to publish and freedom of expression complement and reinforce each other – the former often facilitating the latter. However, attempts to thwart freedom to publish are increasingly commonplace, with daily reports of writers and publishers being silenced by governments, extremists and private interests. To varying degrees, the denial of the right to publish is growing, and few are the countries where it is truly guaranteed.

Much of the IPA’s freedom to publish work entails supporting members in their own national-level efforts to defend the right. We attend judicial proceedings to demonstrate our solidarity with and vigilance over publishers and writers, and we lobby the governments that are behind attempts to gag them. The IPA brings examples of censorship and repression of freedom to publish to the attention of the publishing world, the media and the public through media releases, speeches, reports and articles.

Often, we work in concert with other, likeminded free-speech organizations, such as the international PEN network, Reporters Without Borders, Index on Censorship, Article 19, Human Rights Watch, and many others, to coordinate action on freedom to publish and freedom of expression.

In addition, the IPA awards the annual IPA Prix Voltaire (formerly the Freedom to Publish Prize), the only international prize that highlights the importance and contribution of publishing to freedom of expression.