

ACAP Newsletter: November 2008

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Microsoft speaks up for publishers' copyright

Speaking at the Association of Online Publishers' (AOP) forum in London this month, Microsoft's Chief Counsel on IP, Tom Rubin, asserted that editors must be able to maintain appropriate control of their own content and the experience of their readers, and not cede those to search engines or aggregators.

"To the extent ACAP can develop into an enabler of content flow like Creative Commons and not become an inhibitor like some failed experiments with digital rights management, it has the potential to be an important element of more vibrant business models for publishers in the future... Whether the solution is ACAP or some other method, web sites currently are forced to communicate with search engines using robots.txt, a technical protocol developed 15 years ago without any understanding of how the business needs of newspapers and other web publishers would develop. Using that 1993-era technology to run today's websites is like putting a Fiat engine in a Ferrari."

Rubin also talked of the importance of quality of content and of the importance of making publishing work online to protect that quality. He concluded his speech by saying, "In closing, don't let anyone tell you that the choice is between Luddite resistance to new technology and passive acquiescence to the destruction of your industry. In other words, quality content is of great value and it is time to reclaim what is yours. The stakes here are high. Remember that, in a very real sense, we are all in this together as stewards of our cultural future. So let's finally turn the page on a failed model that has not worked for reporters and editors and publishers. Let's instead work together to build a model that works for newspapers and technology alike – and that sustains and enriches the free and vibrant media that our free societies require."

To read a full transcript of the speech, please go to:

<http://www.microsoft.com/presspass/exec/trubin/11-20-08copyright.msp>

Implementation of ACAP

There has been a 75% increase in the number of known sites that have implemented ACAP since the end of August. A full list of implementers is as usual available on the website.

Technical Update: ACAP addressing new use cases

While work continues to promote implementation of ACAP Version 1.0, the technical focus has broadened to encompass a number of new use cases, which demonstrate the relevance and value of ACAP in a growing range of applications.

1. ACAP and audio-visual content

The project team has been approached by major organisations in the audio-visual content business, with a view to demonstrating how the same ACAP principles already applied to text-based content can be applied to digital audio and audio-visual content such as music and movies. Technical work to date is focused on finalising detailed specifications of the particular Use Cases that ACAP is to address: to communicate access and usage policies both to crawlers and to the systems that render the content for re-play to the end-user. New semantics are being defined for incorporation into the ACAP vocabulary, and new methods of communicating ACAP policies via embedded and linked metadata are being investigated.

2. Web content syndication

The project team is talking to the news industry and to news content aggregators about ways in which ACAP could be used by publishers to include licensing information in news feeds to the aggregators, to indicate which content items may be included for which end-users and categories of end-user in each aggregation service. Work on specifying particular Use Cases is at an early stage.

3. Extended policy expression

Work on other Use Cases has highlighted a need to provide a general mechanism within ACAP for indicating that a given ACAP policy may be extended by agreement between the content owner and an intermediary or end-user. While much of the time such information is for human consumption, a number of use cases have been proposed in which machine-to-machine communication could have an important role, such as in the automation of a permissioning service. The aim of this activity is to define how ACAP could enable a publisher to direct either a human user or an automated process to a permissioning service where requests for extended usage rights could be processed in an automated or partially automated way, eliminating the current slow, costly and labour-intensive methods for transacting such requests. The project team has already identified several generic use cases where such a mechanism would bring real business benefits, and is in discussion with a number of organisations to define specific use cases to work on in greater depth.

Current presentation programme:

2 December	Oslo	Schibsted Norwegian Media Businesses Association
4 December	London	London Online
January'09	tba	PresseMonitor/ German Newspaper Publisher Association
22-25 March'09	Hyderabad	WAN Congress

We have found that speaking platforms are by far our most successful communication tools as we can answer questions and concerns head on. We need as many of these as possible and look to our supporters to provide these opportunities, particularly in countries where we have not yet presented so, please do what you can to help to get the ACAP message out:

- implement ACAP on your website
- provide us with speaking platforms
- distribute our information as widely as possible inside and outside your organisations
- publish our articles in your newsletters/publications
- link to us on your website
- carry editorial on us on your website
- let us know which of your press contacts we should be speaking to

PLEASE CONTINUE TO SPREAD THE WORD...

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us:

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