

New Licensing Solutions for a Changing Children's Publishing Industry

As digital technology continues its steady transformation of the market for children's books, we have seen in recent years many new companies entering the industry to grasp the opportunities on offer, and many new alliances being formed between those new players and traditional publishers. One interesting consequence of these developments has been the recognition among established and experienced publishers that there are significant opportunities to license their content for republication by, for example, games developers, app makers and digital service providers. In turn, these new entrants have begun to learn—many for the first time—the challenges associated with securing permissions to use previously published content, whether it be text, illustrative content, or video. As the children's market evolves, we are seeing a growing need among new content developers to obtain permissions to re-use content from established publishers, as well as directly from authors, and an expectation that the permissions process should be quick, efficient and otherwise trouble-free.

As many publishers will readily admit, the task of securing or granting permissions has not always been a hassle-free experience. The process has often been slow, time-intensive, manual, costly and inefficient, and one important consequence of this has been to place significant pressure on tight production schedules and budgets. As new types of digital products have proliferated, the problems have intensified. It's fortunate in these circumstances that licensing, like the publishing industry it serves, is also changing very quickly and that there are many new services in the market to help publishers—old and new—give and secure permissions for republication more easily, more efficiently, and more cost-effectively. Such services are not only facilitating the many new types of permissions required by new forms of publishing. They are also helping to eliminate much of the difficulty traditionally associated with the permissions process, and making it simpler for content owners to exploit the licensing revenue opportunities that come with the availability of new types of products and new market channels. Everyone—those seeking permission to re-use content and those granting permission to use it—benefits when the process is simplified and when as much as possible of the inefficiency and delay is eliminated.

Those looking to secure permission to re-use previously published content know exactly what they want. Some want to get permission for all the rights they need in a single, completely transparent online transaction and thereby avoid going through the labor-intensive and costly back-and-forth of rights negotiations. Others—and this applies especially to many new entrants getting involved in permissions for the first time—simply want to avoid direct involvement in the whole process, preferring to partner with a company with experience and expertise to secure all the permissions on their behalf.

Those selling rights also have clear requirements. Naturally they want to secure the highest possible revenue for their content, but they often want more than that. They want pricing control and flexibility. They want as much automation as possible and sometimes, when it's appropriate to do so, they want to outsource some or all of the work to a trusted and experienced partner in order to relieve some of the pressure on already over-burdened permissions staff.

Copyright Clearance Center has a direct interest in these issues. Since it was formed in 1978, it has had a very clear and consistent mission: to help rights holders maximize the value of their content and to provide easy-to-use solutions for those wanting to get permission to re-use it. CCC has been serving rights holders for more than thirty years, and has paid more than \$1.3 billion in royalties in the past ten years alone. In that time, the ways in which content is produced and distributed has been transformed by digital technology and the channels through which it is provided to users have multiplied. For academic, scientific, educational, and professional publishers, that process of change has become very familiar. For children's publishers, the transformation has been a more recent experience, but their involvement in digital publishing is now extensive and this is leading many of them to engage for the first time with CCC and to apply its solutions to their businesses as they seek to exploit new licensing opportunities and manage their rights in a more efficient way.

For its part, CCC is responding to the new digital marketplace and the opportunities it offers to rights holders by developing new services that are directly applicable to the changing needs of children's publishers. It recently launched, for example, its Republication License, a solution that not only allows rights holders of all kinds to offer buyers a broad bundle of rights in a single, simple transaction via the CCC website, but also allows them to have the flexibility on pricing that they demand in a marketplace that's changing so rapidly. CCC also recently launched its Permissions Acquisitions Service, aimed not just at rights holders but also any organization that wishes to outsource its permissions acquisition activities. This service is already attracting a lot of interest from those that want to secure multiple permissions quickly and efficiently and to have this work managed on their behalf by a partner with expertise, experience and resources.

Solutions such as these aim to modernize and streamline processes that are integral to the functioning of a market in which new products and channels are proliferating and in which new players are emerging and new alliances are being formed. For new entrants and established publishers, for content owners and new service developers, for rights sellers and rights buyers, the issues and interests

are the same. What everyone wants is to see this new, exciting and increasingly digital industry abandoning as quickly and as completely as it can a permissions process that is outdated, often manual, and often paper-based. What everyone wants are efficient and automated solutions and streamlined services that reflect the dynamism and excitement of today's and tomorrow's children's products and marketplace.

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