

**Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014**  
**Royal Society, London**

For the creative, branded and design industries, the way in which IP is understood by Government and Parliament has been one of the core concerns since 2010. With the Alliance's own [Call for Views](#) process revealing that many businesses and creators in these sectors felt more could be done to make the UK the best place to base IP-rich business, *IP: The Big Debate* provided the opportunity for political parties to signal what future direction might be.



Iain Wright MP (Labour), Mike Weatherley MP (Conservative) and Lord Clement-Jones (Liberal Democrat) were joined by Professor Lionel Bently and Andrew Orłowski in a debate that covered a range of the key topic facing IP-rich businesses across the next Parliament, including the impact of cuts to trading standards, approaches to further reform of copyright and whether consumers benefit from IP.

Adam Singer, Chair of debate sponsors Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society opened proceedings by noting some of the issues facing copyright and IP today: that copyright was not fully understood by those outside of the IP-rich industries and that large market players were unfairly impacting on the earnings of creators, themes that ran throughout the debate.

Andrew Orłowski made the charge that tech companies had provided too great an influence over political elites over the last few years, and the result was a market that led to undue favour to technology companies. This approach was decried by the political voices on the panel, and there was broad agreement from politicians of the importance of intellectual property to the success of the creative, branded and design industries. Noting the number of reviews that had taken place under the current and previous Government, Iain Wright MP stated that he knew that the idea that the next Labour Government would introduce a Bill that would look to reassess aspects of IP would likely be unwelcome, and that there was a need for businesses have stability and confidence in order to succeed. The Intellectual Property Office, he added, should be championing IP. Professor Lionel Bently provided a voice of dissent through these discussions, as he made the case that rather than being weakened, IP rights such as copyright had been strengthened and extended.



It was clear that how sanctions affected were applied in different areas of intellectual property may also be up for consideration in the future. Lord Clement-Jones, who worked extensively on the passage of the Intellectual Property Bill, stated that he believed that rights affecting 3D designs were poorly protected compared to 2D designs, and called for the extension of sanctions against infringement of unregistered design rights. Iain Wright MP agreed with this point, arguing that inconsistency in how sanctions are applied across different rights only created confusion, and that affected enforceability.

The impact of cuts to Trading Standards was raised, with Mike Weatherley MP revealing that he was hoping to see protection to trading standards funding included as part of the Conservative Manifesto, and he also highlighted that the current Government had also established and extended funding for the City of London Police's IP Crime Unit. Professor Lionel Bently stated that he would also like to see government guarantee funding to local trading standards.

The debate ended on an optimistic tone, with panellists highlighting the development of technologies, developments in creative business models, the UK's creative talent pool and renewed understanding of the importance of both IP rights and individual rights reasons to believe that the UK's past successes could be built upon.