



## Political Parties go head to head in IP Question Time “Intellectual Property Is A Property Right”

**December 4 2014:** Politicians from the three main political parties had a spirited debate last night on the future of intellectual property policy after the General Election. Panellists from the political parties were Mike Weatherley MP (Conservative), Iain Wright MP (Labour) and Lord Clement-Jones (Liberal Democrats) and they faced an audience of leading business people and creators from across the design, branded goods, music, software, publishing, film, TV, sports and games sectors.

The politicians were joined by Professor Lionel Bently and Andrew Orłowski with Philip Collins, Chief Leader Writer from the Times, maintaining order.

The debate was organised by the Alliance for Intellectual Property (‘the Alliance’), supported by Authors’ Licensing Collection Society (ALCS), and followed the publication of its manifesto earlier this year which shows the need for clear policies to make UK the best place to start and grow an IP rich business by 2020.

Questions from the audience challenged the panel on some of the big IP issues including whether IP law was fit for the digital era, whether each party had plans for further copyright reform, the impact of cuts to trading standards funding on IP protection and their views on proposals for reform in Brussels.

All the political representatives were adamant that Intellectual Property Rights were not regulations or a framework but a property right that should be protected and promoted. Iain Wright MP stated that the industry needed stability and that he didn’t intend to take a reformist agenda towards IP. Lord Clement-Jones expressed concern that with the advent of 3D printing, three dimensional IP would require greater protection in the future, something he had highlighted during the passage of recent legislation. Mike Weatherley said that the debate about whether IP was somehow impeding consumers was wrong and that IP delivers them great design and exciting content and without it those wouldn’t be here in 20 years’ time.

**Iain Wright** said that *“There is universal recognition that Copyright is a legal right rather than some sort of regulation or bureaucracy.”* Wright added that IP *“should be championed as a legal right.”* Moving on to talk about the Intellectual Property Office, he said that the *“Remit of the IPO should be about championing IP more than it has been in previous years.”*

Talking about the potential for future regulation, Wright said that the sector had had *“Constant tinkering and constant reviews”* and advocated *“a degree of stability and certainty”*

Turning to design rights, Wright said *“We really need to be protecting the smaller designer.”* and in terms of enforcement, he said *“Trading Standards is absolutely vital. The consumer gets a raw deal when local authorities put the red line through trading standards.”*

**Tim Clement-Jones** said that *“If you are going to have a great creative economy you need to remunerate creators properly”*. He added that *“The technology sector seems to think that IP is an optional extra. Platforms need content and the sooner the tech industry recognises that the better.”*

**Mike Weatherley** said that *“IP is a property right and should be protected as such. Hargreaves gave away too much on exceptions”*, adding that *“you can regulate the digital market.”*

**Commenting on the event Richard Mollet, Chair of the Alliance for Intellectual Property said:**

*“Last night we heard unequivocal support from all three main parties for IP which is good news for the vast array of creators and innovators as well as the businesses and employees who rely on IP and for consumers who benefit from the diversity it creates. Of course the devil will be in the detail and the Alliance will continue to push all the parties ahead of the General Election to ensure we don’t get any unwelcome surprises in the next Parliament”*.

ENDS

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Photos are available from the event on request.

#### **Notes to editors:**

The event took place on the 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2014 at the Royal Society and was organised by the Alliance for Intellectual Property, supported by The Authors’ Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS) .

#### **The Alliance for Intellectual Property**

Established in 1998, the Alliance is a UK based coalition of trade associations and enforcement organisations with an interest in ensuring intellectual property rights are promoted and protected. With a combined turnover of over £250 billion, members include representatives of the audiovisual, music, games and business software, and sports industries, branded manufactured goods, publishers, retailers and designers.

[www.allianceforip.co.uk](http://www.allianceforip.co.uk)

[www.thecontentmap.com](http://www.thecontentmap.com)

#### **The Authors’ Licensing & Collecting Society (ALCS)**

ALCS collects fees on behalf of the whole spectrum of UK writers: novelists, film & TV script writers; literary prize winners; poets; freelance journalists; translators and adaptors, as well as thousands of

professional and academic writers who include nurses, lawyers, teachers, scientists and college lecturers. All writers are eligible to join ALCS: further details on membership can be found at [www.alcs.co.uk](http://www.alcs.co.uk). ALCS collects fees that are difficult, time consuming or legally impossible for writers and their representatives to claim on an individual basis: money that is nonetheless due to them. Fees collected are distributed to writers twice a year in February and August. Since its inception, ALCS has distributed over £350 million to the nation's writers.

<http://www.alcs.co.uk>

### **Panel details**

#### **Chair**

- **Philip Collins**, Chief Leader Writer | The Times

#### **Panellists**

- **Mike Weatherley MP**, Conservative | former Adviser to the Prime Minister on IP
- **Iain Wright MP**, Labour | Shadow Minister for Business, Innovation and Skills
- **Lord Clement-Jones**, Liberal Democrat | Vice Chair, APPG Intellectual Property
- **Professor Lionel Bently**, Herchel Smith Professor of Intellectual Property | University of Cambridge
- **Andrew Orłowski**, Executive Editor | The Register