



Associazione Italiana Editori

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Marco Polillo

### **Introduction to the Conference**

#### **“ARROW - The right way to rights information**

Residence Palace – International Press Centre, Room Passage

Rue de la Loi 155 – Bloc C

**Brussels 10 March, 2011, 10.30 – 13.00**

Ladies and gentlemen

First of all, let me thank Mrs Kroes for having joined us today at this conference and, above all, for the support that the Directorate General “Information society” provided to the project, both through co-funding and – even more important – through the constant attention paid to our work and the interest in its results. This was a further incentive for us to achieve the project objectives and contributed in making Arrow a success story, as I hope will be evident from the following presentations.

Arrow is a project genuinely stemming from the entire book world. Its main value is in the collaboration between authors, publishers, collective management organisations and libraries to find solutions to concrete needs. We, as publishers, believe very much in the importance of collaboration. And this is particularly true speaking about ambitious project like Europeana, which Arrow aims to foster, through facilitating the inclusion of copyrighted works.

We also know that the challenges proposed by the digital era can be tackled only if we have an innovative approach.

Technologies, for us, are mainly opportunities, not threats. They are our allies, not enemies. It is a cliché that, in the digital world, “content is king” and our business is to produce and disseminate content. We would hesitate to define ourselves as “king makers”, but for sure we are aware that we are called to play a key role in this new environment.

To do so, we need to identify the value we provide to the society, at economic and cultural level. A key aspect of this value is in the plurality and diversity of the books that every year we produce. In the European Union some tens of thousand of publishers annually issue more than half a million new books, in more than thirty languages! Technologies, in the knowledge society, should be seen as an instrument to further enrich this landscape. So, we need to manage the complexity of the transactions that make this result possible, through innovative ways. The lack of capacity in imagining innovative solutions, in particular in the field of rights clearance, risks resulting in a decrease of the number of players involved, and of books produced. We all – authors, publishers, libraries – desire a content-richer society. And this is the fundamental incentive for the collaboration.

Just a few weeks after the start up of the Arrow project in Europe, from the other side of the Ocean the Google Settlement was announced. The firm opposition that many of us, in all the book communities, had against that agreement was sometimes misinterpreted as a defence of the past. We can say now, in particular thanks to the work we did in the Arrow project, that the ultimate reason for that opposition was the opposite. It was indeed a defence of the future: the advocacy of an innovative approach to look at complexity as an opportunity, opposed to the attitude to over simplify complexity, seen as a problem instead of a richness.

After two years and half, we are here presenting our system, and concrete use cases are emerging that will demonstrate that our collaborative approach is feasible and can better address the needs of all the players involved. In the US, they are still waiting for the approval of the Settlement by a



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judge, and possibly the story will never reach an end. I think that we should be proud, as Europeans, of this difference. We demonstrated that the stakeholders' dialogue is not just more desirable for political reasons, it is also much more effective in practical terms.

So, let me conclude my introduction thanking everybody that made this success story possible.

First, the European Commission, which always promoted and supported such a dialogue. Then all project partners, starting from libraries that were so committed in the project development. Two of them, the French and the German national libraries, are highly represented today by Mrs Niggemann and Mr Racine. Without them, and their colleagues, in particular the team at the TEL office in The Hague, the system would never have been developed.

I would like also to thank European Collective Management Organisations and Books in Print database providers in several countries, which collaborated sometimes investing their own money to be integrated in the system. And the Cineca, for the great job in system development.

And finally, let me say that I am proud to speak in the name of the Federation of European Publishers and of the European publishers' community in general, for this demonstration of the innovative character of our industry.

Last but not least, I am proud to be the president of the Italian publishers association, who coordinated the project. We have been very glad to serve the European book community offering our expertise, strong commitment and our genuine enthusiasm, which are essential to face the future with a proactive attitude.