25 March 2014

Dear Dr Cable

Digital Delays

We are writing to urge the government to implement key reforms to copyright legislation, which we fear could now be subject to delay.

The flexibility to innovate is an important factor contributing to growth and success in a modern knowledge economy. It was for this reason that the government launched a review of UK copyright laws in 2010. The resulting report “Digital Opportunity” recommended a raft of modernisations to copyright law, bringing our copyright laws in line with those in many other developed economies.

We welcome the IPO communique of March 7th, outlining that the Statutory Instruments to introduce the required copyright exceptions are currently with the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments, but we note that there was no commitment as to when the SIs will be introduced into parliament. It now seems highly likely that the government’s own deadline for the introduction of this legislation (April 2014) will be missed. We are writing to express our support for this crucial aspect of the coalition’s economic competitiveness agenda and urge the government to introduce the digital flexibilities into UK well ahead of the summer recess.

As the Hargreaves Review (and before that the 2006 Gowers Review also) concluded, our current copyright laws limit growth, are out of kilter with consumer norms, put our cultural heritage at risk and hold back scientific discovery.

Implementing the copyright exceptions as recommended in the “Digital Opportunity” report will change this. They will enable this country’s wonderful cultural heritage of 20th century music and films that sit in our great libraries and museums to be digitally preserved. By allowing researchers to use computers to analyse research outputs, instead of having manually to cross-reference paper copies, the recommendations will accelerate medical and scientific advancement. By making everyday private copying of the music, films and e-books consumers have paid for legally, copyright law will regain relevance in the eyes of consumers and allow today’s technology start-ups to compete with their European and US rivals. These
modernisations to the law will also permit accessible copies of in-copyright works to be made for the wide range of print-disabled people that copyright law currently does not provide for, such as people with cognitive or hearing disabilities.

We respectfully urge the Government to act swiftly to implement these regulations.

In light of our comments, we would be very happy to meet with you to learn about your intentions concerning laying the draft Statutory Instruments before Parliament. If you would like to arrange a meeting, please do not hesitate to contact Naomi Korn, Chair of the Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance (LACA) on 079 57761032 or at naomi@NAOMIKORN.COM

Yours sincerely,

Sharon Ament, Director, Museum of London
Jeremy Andrew, Head of Library and IT Services, University of Central Lancashire
Peter Baxter, President, IAML (UK & Irl)
Professor Anthony Bowne, Principal, Trinity Laban Conservatoire of Music and Dance
Graham Bulpitt, Director of Library and Student Services, University for the Creative Arts
Stella Butler, University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds
Elizabeth Chapman, Director of Library Services, London School of Economics
Mr D. K. Daniel, Director, Information Services & Systems, Swansea University
Andrew Ellis, Director, Public Catalogue Foundation
Dr Jeremy Farrar, Director, Wellcome Trust
Chris Fowler, Chair, ARLIS UK & Ireland
Mark Freeman, Chair, Share the Vision
Professor Andrew George, Vice Principal (Education and International), Brunel University
Julie Hart, Assistant Director, Library Services, Aberystwyth University
Richard Heseltime, University Librarian and Director of Library and Learning Innovation, University of Hull
Keith Hodgson, University Secretary, University of Reading
Bernard Horrocks, Chair, Museums IP Network
Prof Alex Hughes, Pro-Vice-Chancellor External, University of Kent
Pat Johnson, University Librarian and Head of Library and Learner Support, University of Derby
Dr Jessica Gardner, Director of Library Services, University of Bristol
Aled Gruffydd Jones, Chief Executive and Librarian, National Library of Wales
Roly Keating, Chief Executive, British Library
Jim Killock, Executive Director, Open Rights Group
Thalia Knight, Director of Library and Surgical Information Services, The Royal College of Surgeons of England
Tim Knox, FSA, Director and Marlay Curator, The Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge
Naomi Korn, Chair, Libraries and Archives Copyright Alliance
Matthew Lawson, Assistant Director, Library and Learning Development, Middlesex University
Diane Lees, Director-General, Imperial War Museums
John Leighton, Director, the National Galleries of Scotland
Jeff Lynn, Chairman, Coalition for a Digital Economy (COADEC)
Dr Darryl Mead, Deputy National Librarian, National Library of Scotland
Tom Morgan, Project Director, Museums Digital Content Exchange
Sam Mullins, Managing Director, London Transport Museum
Sandy Nairne, Director, National Portrait Gallery
Tamalie Newbery, Executive Director, Association of Independent Museums
Richard Ovenden, FRSA, FSA, Bodley’s Librarian, Bodleian Libraries
Nick Poole, Chief Executive Officer, Collections Trust
Dr David C Prosser, Executive Director, Research Libraries UK (RLUK)
Dr Gordon Rintoul, CBE, Director, National Museums Scotland
Caroline Rock, Director, Library & Learning Support Services, University of Surrey
Ann Rossiter, Executive Director, Society of College, National and University Libraries
Martin Roth, Director, Victoria and Albert Museum
Professor Rick Rylance, Chair, Research Councils UK (RCUK)
Sir Nicholas Serota, Director, Tate
Martin Taylor, Chair, Archives and Records Association (UK and Ireland)
J. Stephen Town, Director of Information, University of York
John Tuck, Director of Library Services, Royal Holloway, University of London
Dr Christoph Vogtherr, Director, The Wallace Collection
Martyn Wade, Chair of Council, Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals
Peter Wakelin, Director Collections & Research Amgueddfa Cymru - National Museum Wales
Katy Wrathall, University Librarian, York St John University

CC: The Rt Hon Mr David Cameron MP; The Rt Hon Mr David Willetts MP; The Rt Hon Mr Ed Vaizey MP; The Viscount Younger of Leckie; Dr Ros Lynch, Mr Robin Stout