



## INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY EDUCATION IN UNIVERSITY ENVIRONMENT IN BULGARIA

**Tereza Trencheva, Stoyan Denchev**

State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT)  
Sofia/Bulgaria

[t.trencheva@unibit.bg](mailto:t.trencheva@unibit.bg), [s.denchev@unibit.bg](mailto:s.denchev@unibit.bg)

### Abstract

*Scientific interest in the problems of Intellectual Property in the digital realm takes an important position in research. Copyright and legal issues in the digital reality are of interest for researchers and practitioners, in both, the member countries of the European Union and throughout the world. There are many discussion issues related to the problematic of Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright and the Internet, but a thorough study of intellectual property as part of the information literacy of students is missing in some European countries including Bulgaria.*

*The paper aims to present a project of the State University for Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT). "Analysis of the common practices in the use of products of intellectual property in university information environment." DMU 03/3 is a project led by Dr. Teresa Trencheva funded by the National Science Fund of the Ministry of Education, Youth and Science in the competition "Young Scientists". The project aims to explore the mind and culture of behavior among young people in Bulgaria, particularly students, to protect intellectual property on the Internet.*

*The research team, united around a project concept involves young scientists, some experienced researchers and graduate students working in the field of intellectual property, library and information sciences, cultural heritage and information technology and complies with interdisciplinary issues of the project.*

*In progress is the first stage of the project, and the questionnaire and survey have already been a fact. The survey has been conducted among the students in nine Bulgarian universities accredited in the educational and professional field "Public Communication and Information Science." The survey aims to explore, analyze and summarize the level of the respondents' familiarity with the issues related to Intellectual property protection from the lectures at the university, and what is also their attitude about the preservation and protection of copyright in the Internet.*

*An extremely important moment of the project's program is the site visit of the World Intellectual Property Organization which held in January, 2013. Some of the purposes of the site visit in WIPO were to discuss some very important items for the dissemination of Intellectual Property knowledge and the opportunity of SULSIT to become a member of the Global Intellectual Property Network and part of The WIPO Academic Institutions Program.*

*An important objective of the project is the accumulation of research material which finds application in updating existing training programs related to the study of intellectual property and direct application in the educational process. The sustainability of the project results in perspective will be achieved by creating a project web site, digital library and online journal - platforms for future development and promotion of international collaboration with colleagues from the country and abroad.*

### 1. Introduction

The contemporary information (already transformed as a knowledge) society imposes new requirements on the competences and adequate knowledge of modern young professionals,



graduated their higher education. This is especially true for the professional fields related to information and social sciences, as currently these sciences are one of the most dynamically developing [1].

Analysis of completed procedures for program accreditation of professional fields "Public Communications and Information Science" in Bulgaria gives reason to claim that trained professionals in this field have the knowledge and skills necessary for a successful career. Trained in the professional field are with good theoretical and practical preparation that matches the needs of the country by university graduates in this field [2].

As the main spheres of realization of these specialists are: regional and national media, institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the use of information resources is the basis of their professional activity and condition for their successful realization, they need to be well informed on the issues of the protection of Intellectual Property. T. Todorova emphasizes that the copyright competence is an essential part of information literacy of students in this professional field in terms of Internet usage and digital content [3].

A basic principle of the information society is that the information access is a fundamental human right, ICTs create opportunities for its free practice and here arises the question of the intellectual property rights [4]. The interest to the problems of Intellectual Property in the digital realm takes an important position in university educational and curriculum research. Copyright and legal issues in the digital reality are of great importance for researchers and practitioners throughout the world. There are many discussion issues related to the problematic of Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright and the Internet, but a thorough study of intellectual property as part of the information literacy of students is missing in majority European countries including Bulgaria.

The State University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (SULSIT) is one of the European universities in Bulgaria appreciated the role and importance of Intellectual Property as a stimulator of innovation development and step by step carrying out the necessary steps to disseminate knowledge and information on Intellectual Property. It conducts its activities in support of the initiatives of the two leading organizations in the world - the World Intellectual Property Organization and the European Patent Organization, and implement its initiatives.

SULSIT has contributed to the successful dissemination of knowledge in the field of Intellectual Property, as there are already 18 years of experience in Intellectual Property education and is university, which has defined excellence in preparing students for Intellectual Property. Founder of teaching Intellectual Property in SULSIT is Prof. Dr. S. Galabova [5].

## **2. Analysis of the common practices in the use of products of intellectual property in university information environment (June 2012 – June 2014)**

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The research team, united around a project concept involves young scientists, some experienced researchers and graduate students working in the field of intellectual property, library and information sciences, cultural heritage and information technology and complies with interdisciplinary issues of the project.

In progress is the first stage of the project, and the questionnaire and survey have already been a fact. The survey has been conducted among the students in nine Bulgarian universities accredited in the educational and professional field "Public Communication and Information Science." The survey aims to explore, analyse and summarize the level of the respondents' familiarity with the issues related to Intellectual property protection from the lectures at the university, and what is also their attitude about the preservation and protection of copyright in the Internet.



An extremely important moment of the project's program is the site visit of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) which held in January, 2013. Some of the purposes of the site visit in WIPO were to discuss some very important items for the dissemination of Intellectual Property knowledge and the opportunity of SULSIT to become a member of the Global Intellectual Property Network and part of The WIPO Academic Institutions Program.

An important objective of the project is the accumulation of research material which finds application in updating existing training programs related to the study of intellectual property and direct application in the educational process. The sustainability of the project results in perspective will be achieved by creating a project web site, digital library and online journal - platforms for future development and promotion of international collaboration with colleagues from the country and abroad.

## 2.1 Overview of the project survey

As a target group of the survey "Protection of intellectual property in the Internet", realized as an initial stage of the project are preferred students from specialties involved in the professional field "Public Communications and Information Science" of all universities in Bulgaria, having valid accreditation program for training in this professional field. The total number of these universities is 9 and the total number of the questionnaire surveys is 570. Next Graphic visualize the universities and the number of the questionnaires held there.

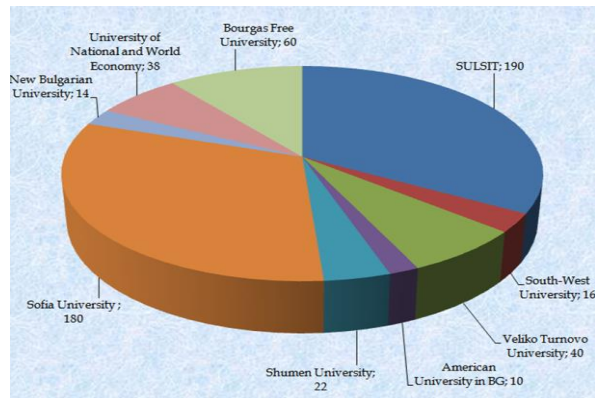


Fig. 1 Target group of the survey

### About the target group

- ❑ In view of the specificity and accuracy obtained from the survey data, the range of the target group is narrowed and only refers students in degree "Bachelor".
- ❑ The questionnaire survey was conducted during October – November, 2012 among the students who have studied or will study the subject of Intellectual Property Protection or a related discipline, including as a module of copyright protection.

### Summary of the survey results

In conclusion it can be summarized as follows:

Students studying in the professional field "Public communication and information sciences" are generally less familiar with copyrighted works, but impressive is the fact that there is a statistically significant difference between the students that have learned IP discipline and these that haven't learned it yet. The students that have learned such a discipline feel more confident and better informed on issues related with copyrighted works. All respondents, of course are familiar with the institutions involved in the protection of Intellectual Property. Worrying is the fact that a large percentage of respondents did not thought about copyright in the use of Internet materials for educational purposes, but is hopeful that once again there was a statistically significant difference between the students that have learned IP discipline and these that haven't learned it yet.



It is noteworthy that a high percentage of the respondents who are not familiar with the ways of intellectual property protection on the Internet.

Respondents perceive the misappropriation of intellectual property and copyright on the Internet as a crime and believe that the legal and judicial system is necessary to intensify the pressure on violators. It is noteworthy that students are aware basically who wins by the proliferation of unlicensed software, and many of them clearly state its negative position. Indicative is the difference between the attitude towards issues concerning copyright on the Internet between the students that have learned IP discipline and these that haven't learned it yet.

## **2.2 Site visit of the World Intellectual Property Organization (22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2013)**

In the period 22<sup>nd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> January, 2013, on the invitation of the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), at the headquarters of the organization in Geneva has held a two-day meeting between the leaders and representatives of the departments "Copyright infrastructure", "Cultural and Creative Industries", „Global network of Intellectual Property Academies", section "Copyright and legal limitations and exceptions for libraries and archives ", Centre for arbitration and mediation of WIPO and the management of SULSIT, represented by the Rector of the university Prof. DSc. Stoyan Denchev and his deputies Prof. Dr Irena Peteva and Prof. Dr. Ivanka Pavlova.

At the meeting was presented intermediate report of the project activities and results of a national survey on "Protection of Intellectual Property in the Internet", held as part of the project DMU 03/3.

Project Manager Dr. Trencheva was invited for joint publication with Prof. DSc. Denchev in the "Wipo magazine" for wider publicity of the results of the national empirical study. The work meeting was held in a very intense agenda.

In addition to presentations by SULSIT with presentations attended Dr. Dimitar Ganchev - Deputy Director and Head of Creative Industries Section, Mrs Geidy Lung - Industry experts "Copyright and legal limitations and exceptions for libraries and archives" and Mr. Ty Gray – Legal Staff of Domain Name Dispute Resolution Section and Centre for arbitration and mediation in WIPO.

During the meeting were discussed the possibilities of creating a Centre of Intellectual Property in the field of social sciences as part of the structure of SULSIT and its transformation into part of the Global Network on Intellectual Property in WIPO. It was established a contact with Mr. Marcelo Di Pietro, director of the Global Network for Intellectual Property. At the meeting with Mr Di Pietro were discussed the documents and conditions of the WIPO.

On behalf of the WIPO was made a proposal SULSIT to become a centre of the deposit literature of the organization. At the working meeting the Bulgarian delegation was accepted by the Deputy Director General Johannes Christian Wichard and Michal Shvantner - Director of Department for Europe and Asia.

SULSIT received as a donation literature on issues of intellectual property. Finally, participants in the meeting discussed the possibilities for future cooperation in the current 2013 and outlined the highlights of this in the long run.

## **3. Conclusion**

Observations show that the competence of the students of professional field "Public communications and information science" on issues related to Intellectual Property is not at good level and there is a real need for additional knowledge and training.

The presented project raises many controversial issues, outlined issues as they are discussed at various levels - legislative and executive power, as well as various scientific and cultural events. It's necessary to be held, problem-oriented education to students from above mentioned professional field and continuing education of professionals from library, cultural and educational institutions. Information literacy is infallible barometer of authenticity, credibility and the different aspects of the sources as the only guarantor of students' autonomy, independence and control over their own education [6].

To achieve these competencies an important role has the training in Intellectual Property the knowledge of international conventions and directives, and good practices for the protection of intellectual products in the digital space. The inclusion of disciplines concerning the issues of



protection of Intellectual property on the Internet is a natural and necessary taking into account the profile of education and implementation of the future specialists.

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