

Educational Community Articulates Principles for Intellectual Property in the Digital Environment

by [Mary Case](#), Director of the ARL Office of Scholarly Communication

At their respective meetings in May, the ACLS and the ARL Boards of Directors endorsed the National Humanities Alliance (NHA) statement of *Basic Principles for Managing Intellectual Property in the Digital Environment*. Drafted by the NHA Committee on Libraries and Intellectual Property, the document is intended to help build consensus within the educational community on mutual expectations for publisher and user behavior regarding the use of intellectual property in the digital environment.

The principles document grew out of the NHA Board's concern with the limited progress being made by the Conference on Fair Use (CONFU) discussions. They believed that if agreement could not be reached by the various groups represented at CONFU, it was important for the educational community itself to come to consensus on these issues. Not only would such a consensus allow creators, publishers, and users to move forward in the digital environment, but it would also provide individual institutions and coalitions a common set of broad principles against which to evaluate legislative proposals. Moreover, the educational community would strengthen its position in the ongoing legislative debates on intellectual property if it could speak with one voice.

The NHA is seeking broad endorsement of these principles by universities, scholarly societies, and other research and educational organizations. Individual ARL member institutions are encouraged to use the document to foster discussion of copyright-related issues on their campuses; to seek institutional endorsement of the statement; and to develop institutional policies consonant with these principles. Formal endorsements can be sent to [John Hammer](#), Executive Director of the National Humanities Alliance, 21 Dupont Circle, NW, Washington, DC 20036.

The National Humanities Alliance was created in 1981 to unify public interest in support of federal programs in the humanities. The Alliance is made up of scholarly and professional associations; organizations of museums, libraries, historical societies, higher education, and state humanities councils; university and independent centers for scholarship; and other organizations concerned with national humanities policies. The [NHA statement](#) is reprinted in its entirety in this newsletter.

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