

## Provisional Committee on Proposals Related to a WIPO Development Agenda Fourth Session

Intervention by the Library Copyright Alliance  
June 2007

Mr. Chairman, thank you for the opportunity to address the Assembly. I am speaking today on behalf of the Library Copyright Alliance, representing five major library associations of the United States.

Before beginning, Mr. Chairman, we would like to congratulate you on your re-election and wish you every success in your endeavors. We appreciate the opportunity to continue to work with you in the coming months.

Mr. Chairman, the Library Copyright Alliance believes that libraries, like the copyright system itself, are an engine of progress. Libraries improve the efficiency of the distribution mechanism for access to information. Because they provide a mechanism for the sharing of information, they make it possible to deliver more information to more people than would otherwise be possible. Similarly, because libraries aggregate resources for the purchase of information, they also create more opportunities for the sales of more content than would be the case if such sales were dependent upon individuals. Because of this symbiotic relationship between content owners and libraries, it is in the best interests of citizens of every country and the copyright industries alike for there to be reasonable accommodations to meet the needs of libraries and their users.

In particular, libraries support a robust and growing public domain;

They support the preservation of the cultural heritage of our countries

And they support the sharing of information in ways that do not prejudice the rights of the copyright owners.

Last week, Mr. Bill Gates addressed the graduating class at Harvard. According to the Wall Street Journal, he said:

*Humanity's greatest advances are not in its discoveries – but in how those discoveries are applied to reduce inequity. Whether through democracy, strong public education, quality health care or broad economic opportunity – reducing inequity is the highest human achievement. (WSJ June 8, 2007, p.1)*

We believe that Mr. Gates' statement captures much of the spirit of what libraries are all about, and we hope that this organization will work to find appropriate ways to support libraries to eliminate the inequities that exist in the availability of information and the access to knowledge.

Robert L. Oakley  
June 8, 2007



The American Association of Law Libraries (AALL) is a nonprofit educational organization with over 5,000 members nationwide. AALL's mission is to promote and enhance the value of law libraries to the legal and public communities, to foster the profession of law librarianship, and to provide leadership in the field of legal information and information policy. <http://www.aall.org/>  
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The American Library Association (ALA) is a nonprofit educational organization of over 65,000 librarians, library trustees, and other friends of libraries dedicated to improving library services and promoting the public interest in a free and open information society. <http://www.ala.org/>  
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The Association of Research Libraries (ARL) is a nonprofit organization of 123 research libraries in North America. ARL's members include university libraries, public libraries, government and national libraries. Its mission is to shape and influence forces affecting the future of research libraries in the process of scholarly communication. ARL programs and services promote equitable access to and effective uses of recorded knowledge in support of teaching, research, scholarship and community service. <http://www.arl.org/>  
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The Medical Library Association (MLA), a nonprofit, educational organization, is a leading advocate for health sciences information professionals with more than 4,700 members worldwide. Through its programs and services, MLA provides lifelong educational opportunities, supports a knowledgebase of health information research, and works with a global network of partners to promote the importance of quality information for improved health to the health care community and the public. <http://www.mlanet.org/>  
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The Special Libraries Association (SLA) is a nonprofit global organization for innovative information professionals and their strategic partners. SLA serves more than 12,000 members in 83 countries in the information profession, including corporate, academic and government information specialists. SLA promotes and strengthens its members through learning, advocacy and networking initiatives. <http://www.sla.org/>  
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