

## ‘Copyright World’ and Access to Information: Conjoined *via* the Internet

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Access to information, despite wide intellectual acceptance, is still a struggle for many in various quarters of the world. In today's era there exist constraints in the way information is shared; dividing continents based on the way information is accessible to its people. This paper strives to understand the underpinning of the accessibility to information in the human right perspective, with a special mention of the current debate on accessibility of the Internet on the lines of concepts which constitute emerging access to knowledge coalition. The arguments of the present paper take the following form: It begins with an introduction to the oft-debated access to information question; goes on to elucidate the view of various scholars on why information needs to be free and extends the aspect of freedom of information to the human right paradigm; then expounds the activism of 'access to knowledge' advocates for access to information; and finally talks about European Union's legalization of access to information on the Internet as a 'fundamental right' before conclusion.

**Keywords:** Access to information, A2K, copyright, Internet, human rights

'Our society is truly an information society, our time an information age'<sup>1</sup> are words that aptly depict the world today as openness and freedom of information become burning global issues. The 'knowledge economy' is a reminder that information and knowledge are crucial factors in human development, which is reflected in the words of the philosopher Francis Bacon, '*Scientia potentia est*' (knowledge is power).<sup>2</sup> Despite a rich history and wide intellectual acceptance, the 'right to know' is not universally granted (the right to know on the Internet is a particularly bitter struggle in many parts of the world).<sup>3</sup> The rapid advances in technology and networks over the past two decades have only brought these questions to the forefront once again.

International organizations, governments, academia, industry, and the media have all begun to grapple with information and its ancillaries as a global policy issue. The first United Nations World Summit on the Information Society (WSIS)<sup>4</sup> recognized the connections between information technology and human rights with a Declaration of Principles that called for the development of the information society to conform to recognized standards of human rights. Critical issues in the policy debates around WSIS have been the so-called digital divide, which reflects a knowledge divide, a social divide, and an economic

divide;<sup>5</sup> and the need for a nondiscriminatory 'information society' to provide universal access to information technology in local languages throughout the developing world.<sup>6</sup>

A crucial challenge for the 'information society' is that of creating a balanced and lucid legal framework to safeguard fundamental rights and freedom in the digital world as content in the digital world is made up of works claiming copyright protection. However, 'the digitization and circulation of works over networks such as the Internet means that low-cost, high-quality copies can be made quickly, and these copies can also be sent to many other people around the world, irrespective of borders'.<sup>7</sup>

It is on these lines that this paper progresses, glancing and pausing on the nuances behind access to information as a necessary element in the progress of the commons.

### Information as a Free Good

Information and access are terms with multiple meanings. It is worth considering how these terms are construed in relation to each other. In this part, the opinion of various valued jurists is assimilated.

The term information is defined in 'a broader generic sense to include abstract objects and knowledge of various goods....abstract objects are species of information'.<sup>8</sup> Rawls defined primary goods as 'things that every rational man is presumed to want. These goods normally have a use whatever a

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person's rational plan of life'.<sup>9</sup> Drahos categorized 'information' as primary goods, stating that 'it may be perhaps the most important primary good when one considers its role in one's life, the economy and the development of knowledge, culture and its impact on power in a society'.<sup>8</sup> Rawls further classified primary goods into social and natural primary goods. Thus, natural primary goods consist of 'health, vigour, intelligence and imagination',<sup>9</sup> suggesting that these are the inherent qualities with which a person is born with, though diminishable or enhanceable as a consequence of external factors, such as an individual upbringing, societal influences and the like. Social primary goods are, however, 'rights, liberties, powers, privileges, wealth, income and opportunities',<sup>9</sup> traits innate by virtue of a person's existence in civil society. Hence, it can be inferred that information is a social primary good that is today just as essential to the welfare and development of a person as are rights, liberties, powers and opportunities because in 'a social structure in which citizens have equal rights to basic liberties, citizens require equal access to information so that they can strategize and make correct decisions'.<sup>8</sup>

Another way of saying it would be that knowledge is not only good in itself; it is rationally essential that persons have access to information if they are to adequately meet their needs or carry out any plans or goals in life. John Stuart Mill<sup>10</sup> weaved his argument of free expression on the importance of people being able to weigh all sides of an issue meaning thereby that 'free speech is to be defended on the grounds that persons ought to be able to access information'.<sup>10</sup>

Accordingly, the right to access is not merely a liberty right, but also a welfare right. That is, an individual's information rights place duties on governments to provide access to information. More so, access to information is indeed necessary in order to live a 'minimally good life'<sup>11</sup> in at least three ways. First, human beings are creatures with a capacity and a desire for knowledge. A life deprived of adequate access to information and knowledge is a seriously impoverished life. Second, knowledge is not only good in itself; it is pragmatically essential that persons have access to information if they are to have the capacity to exercise their other rights. In this sense, knowledge is what Rawls called a 'primary good'. Third, in order for persons to effectively exercise and protect their other rights, they need access to information.

It should be noted, that, while the issue of information quality is not discussed here, it is important to clarify that right to access information is synonymous with the right to access quality information (just as a right to food implies a right to sufficiently nutritious food). Thus, fulfilling the right to access information will require that the format of information should be made most comprehensible to the people who need it.

The consequences of being cut off from flow of information itself need to be understood. If there is nobody to listen to or no one to share ideas with, then the information right has no impact. Thus there arises a need for access to appropriate information technology. Thus, appropriate information technology is certainly part of the information right. Linked to this, the Internet has become the standard mode of distance communication for all media (voice, video, text, etc.) and to be excluded from this information technology is, effectively, to be excluded from information. Given a symmetric claim to information as a universal human right, and the Internet being more than just an incrementally useful information technology; the Internet should be a human right in and of itself.<sup>12</sup>

Digitalization has led to a movement towards redefinition of impoverishment: poverty is no longer to be identified in terms of material deprivations but in terms of access to information in cyberspace. Thus, one hears of 'dead' or 'wild' zones of urban impoverishment in terms of cyber-poverty, rather than in those of right to food, housing and health. The new South is cyber-poor; the new North is cyber-rich, thus marketing what is now named as a 'digital divide'.<sup>13</sup> This feature, in all its complexity and contradiction, complicates the task of reading the future of human rights. However one thing is clear, the patterns of global hegemony of ownership of cyber-technology and consequent cyber-vassalage are here to stay and further enhance the North-South inequities, unless human rights movements foster new futures for the cyber-proletariat.<sup>13</sup>

On the 'have' side, a primary concern is ensuring that people who must access the Internet via free access points are not hampered by restrictive filters. Also, to strike a balance between ensuring the human right of access to information while determining appropriate legal limitations and prosecution for inappropriate use is a significant challenge.

On the 'have-not' side, installing the infrastructure so that people can get information via the Internet is only the beginning. Once connected to the Internet, the local culture must be one which will allow users to access the system. Basic survival needs must be met to make seeking additional information worthwhile. Once this level is achieved, all the problems of the 'have side' of the digital divide fall into place.<sup>14</sup>

Access to information propels people around the world to intervene in public processes and change laws; without the information, there would be no change. The centrality of access to information is the key underlying rationale for freedom of expression in the first place. The importance of freedom of expression has been explained in three key ways, as an aspect of human dignity, as the best means of ascertaining the truth and as a fundamental underpinning of democracy.<sup>15</sup> Freedom of information plays an important role in all three.

One of the main reasons for the interest in human rights may be that traditional copyright doctrine seems incapable of resolving virulent conflicts which result from a radical commercialization of information.<sup>16</sup> In the information society, copyright has become a pre-condition for the functioning of most businesses trading digital products such as music, films, video games, etc. From the perspective of consumers, however, copyright in a digital environment (especially the Internet) is often experienced as an instrument primarily used to exclude users from information which was freely accessible before.<sup>17</sup> This experience is in sharp contrast with the idea of free culture which for a long time has been promised by influential promoters of the Internet. Referring to human rights while interpreting copyright and its exceptions may be thus perceived as a re-constitutionalization of the distinction between access to and exclusion from information in the digital age.<sup>18</sup> Another paradigm brought to the forefront is the argument that the TRIPS Agreement is already outdated as it neglects to address the vision of the international intellectual property market soon becoming on-line and suggests that this critical omission could be used unfairly by publishers to restrict the free-flow of ideas as a means of profiting from their copyrights.<sup>19</sup>

Copyright has traditionally been perceived as a catalyst for intellectual freedom. One of the most famous statements in support of this view originates

from the Supreme Court of the United States. In *Harper & Row*<sup>20</sup> in 1985, the Supreme Court held:

'...it should not be forgotten that the Framers intended copyright itself to be the engine of free expression. By establishing a marketable right to the use of one's expression, copyright supplies the economic incentive to create and disseminate ideas.'

The assumptions on the relation between copyright and free speech underlying the judgment of the Supreme Court seem to have changed remarkably since 1985. Due to an evolution towards digital networked environments, the possibility of controlling inputs to creation and communication has increased dramatically.<sup>18</sup>

The billion dollar question then, is – should not everybody be able to experience the benefits of and free and open Internet access? But it would make the task of concealment that much more difficult. And in a culture of openness it would have made the ultimate revelation that more unpleasant.<sup>21</sup>

### **Activism by Access to Knowledge Advocates**

Access to Knowledge (A2K) advocates have attempted to reframe public understanding regarding the just and efficient conditions for the use, creation, and re-creation of knowledge. Many use the issue of access to refocus traditional configurations around intellectual property. A2K<sup>22</sup> activists have proven remarkably creative and successful in recent years, not only in contesting the contours of intellectual property law, but also in identifying weaknesses and failures in the regime of intellectual property, spaces where new regimes for generating and managing knowledge and knowledge goods might evolve.<sup>23</sup>

The most prominent example in the arena of activism by A2K advocates relates to the attempts at the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) to introduce new multilateral agreements to defend the rights of the visually impaired and rebalance the current copyright regime. There are problems galore for the visually disabled segment of the population print disabled, as most of the laws are not disabled friendly.

Currently, copyright laws do not have explicit provisions about converting material into accessible formats. The visually impaired have to scan and

convert printed material into electronic formats and use screen reading software (like NVDA<sup>24</sup> or JAWS<sup>25</sup>) to listen to it. For any other format, there is the requirement of a compulsory licence. The position as of now is that most converting is done by parents of disabled children, students and volunteers, not by organizations, making the now-prevalent legal regulation all the more cumbersome for the visually challenged.

These dilemmas exist worldwide; Canada is an example,<sup>26</sup> where such concerns prevail.<sup>27</sup> In America too, 10 million Americans who are blind cannot 'read' electronic books because of a copyright law glitch, thanks to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act 1998 (DMCA). The DMCA punishes people with disabilities, say some experts in law and technology. They contend it clashes with existing copyright laws and even the constitution.<sup>28</sup>

In a world which is turning into a global village, where a book can be ordered online and shared; or where a library can be found to read a novel, or do research for a school project or in such circumstances wherein a book published in one country can be sent to another in a matter of seconds for printing and distribution there, should not it mean that everyone benefits? Millions of people are missing out on access to even the most basic educational texts. Among those largely excluded from reading are blind<sup>29</sup> and partially sighted people. The good news is that the same technological innovation that opens new worlds of information to the sighted majority also provides the means to ensure that no book need now be closed to the blind minority. A digital file can be speedily converted to braille, audio or large print, depending on the requirement of a blind user. Text-to-speech screen readers can read documents to a blind person. There is no longer any technical reason that could bar a blind person from reading a book. Shockingly, though, some 95 per cent of books are never made available in any of the formats mentioned above<sup>30</sup>, and therefore remain closed to blind and other print disabled people. This is what the World Blind Union refers to as a 'book famine'.<sup>31</sup> However, the global information society has given rise to international legal barriers to reading for print disabled people that can and ought to be removed at the level of WIPO.<sup>31</sup>

Also, organizations like the National Federation of the Blind strongly believes that, correctly interpreted, the Chafee Amendment<sup>32</sup> covers e-texts, but acknowledges that authoritative support for this

interpretation would be welcome,<sup>33</sup> leading to the conclusion that the benefit for disabled should be institutionalized.

The visually challenged segment of the Indian population also experienced the dilemma in the proposed Copyright (Amendment) Bill, 2010, wherein Section 52 (1) (zb) had the following fallacious proposed addition:

The adaptation, reproduction, issue of copies or communication to the public of any work in a format, including sign language, specially designed only for the use of persons suffering from a visual, aural or other disability that prevents their enjoyment of such work in their normal format.

This proposed addition is flawed, as only those formats which are specially designed (e.g. Braille for the visually impaired, or sign language for the aurally disabled) to cater to the needs of the blind and other persons with visual or print disabilities will fall within this exception (hence leaving out large-text, e-books and talking books). This provision may not be feasible for a majority of the population of the perceptually-disabled.<sup>34</sup> This amendment, hence, would have been to their disadvantage. India has, however, as a result of persistent opposition, managed to amend this fallacy and has incorporated the change which nations across the world are still grappling with.<sup>35</sup>

Internationally, WIPO's top copyright negotiating forum, The Standing Committee on Copyright and Related Rights (SCCR) has agreed to move forward with discussions that could lead to better access to copyright-protected works by the blind, visually impaired and other reading-disabled persons. In December 2009, SCCR<sup>36</sup> decided to accelerate the work on copyright exceptions and limitations for the benefit of persons with reading disabilities, thereby aiming at an international consensus regarding exceptions and limitations for perpetually disabled persons. A proposal for a treaty<sup>37</sup> (based on text prepared by the World Blind Union<sup>38</sup>) was submitted in May 2009 by Brazil, Ecuador and Paraguay. Suggestions by SCCR, includes identification and developing solutions to improve the availability of copyright-protected published works in formats accessible to reading – disabled persons; and in a reasonable time frame.<sup>36</sup>

The Sullivan Report, a 'Study on copyright limitation and exceptions for the visually impaired'<sup>39</sup> constituted by WIPO concentrates on issues that apply 'particularly to visually impaired people, or issues that apply with a much greater impact on visually impaired people than on those with normal sight and the problems faced by those who want, or need, to read for any purpose and are only unable to do so because of the absence of an accessible copy of the material they want to, or need to, read'.<sup>40</sup> Providing an argument for bringing about exception for the visually impaired, the report states that 'visually impaired people have needs now that cannot be ignored and exceptions do provide some solutions to some of their problems'.<sup>39</sup>

Another aspect of A2K activism revolves around the creation of open-access journals (OAJs). OAJs can be a mechanism to effectively address the problem of the global information imbalance. This 'journal crisis' is a reality that must be addressed if the information poverty currently experienced in the developing world is to be resolved.<sup>41</sup> The Internet's current motto of 'information wants to be free' and 'information is oxygen' has fuelled a brand new debate for reshaping traditional print journals; which is seen by many as a dysfunctional, high-cost system of traditional scholarly publishing skewed with skyrocketing subscription prices and decreased or flattened library budgets. OAJs<sup>42</sup> are a good choice for universities and organizations in the developing world. As for research, scholars from all over the world must be able to read each other's work, most importantly in the resources-deprived world. Additionally, opportunities are created for scholars in less resourced countries, to distribute local research in a highly visible way, more so as the developing nation scholars end up spending unaffordable sums on journals from the global North for information; and publish their output in marginal 'local' journals, which are not read or cited by researchers in the global North.<sup>43</sup>

It is a factual position that the information needs of developing countries today are at par with the other burgeoning issues faced by them, including those of poverty, inadequate drinking water, high illiteracy rates, intense foreign debt, overpopulation, and a heavy disease burden. A common link underlying these problems is that science and technology could play a key role in their alleviation. At the same time, access to knowledge can help create stronger social,

economic, and technical infrastructures that are essential in the development process. As long as this asymmetry in research output and access to up-to-date information remains, research in the developing world will remain isolated and their research will continue to have little impact.<sup>44</sup>

The A2K movement has begun to reveal an important reality: today, freedom and justice are increasingly mediated by decisions that were until recently considered totally technical—decisions about the scope of patent law, about exceptions and limitations to copyright for the blind, about the differential virtues of prizes and patents for stimulating government investment in neglected diseases. By politicizing a discourse that was once highly technocratic, the A2K movement is rendering visible, the once-obscure vectors of the transmission of wealth and power over life. It demands that the concepts and terms central to intellectual property be introduced in everyday discourse and become legible in their political implications around the world.

### **The European Union Example: Internet Access as a Fundamental Right**

While the framers of the Constitutions worldwide have talked about the rights of assembly, speech, and religion, the modern world has crowned new rights with reference to the boom in information technology and its ancillaries. In light of which, the pertinent question is whether Internet access as a fundamental human right is also an essential?<sup>45</sup>

Nearly four out of five adults voted in the affirmative in a BBC World Service poll conducted on more than 27,000 adults across 26 countries to answer one primary question: 'Is Internet access a fundamental human right?'<sup>46</sup> 87 per cent of users felt Internet access should be the fundamental right while more than 70 per cent of non-users felt that they should have access to the Internet. Although users are somewhat divided on whether the Internet should be regulated, they are in agreement on its usefulness for learning and information discovery.<sup>47</sup> Almost universally (90 per cent), respondents said that the Internet was a good place to learn and almost 80 per cent said the Internet brought them greater freedom.

Nations like Finland<sup>48</sup> and Estonia<sup>49</sup> have already ruled that Internet access is a human right for their citizens.<sup>46</sup> Mexico, Korea and Brazil lead the way here with all having greater than 90 per cent agreement, while Pakistan, India and Kenya have

above 50 per cent in agreement.<sup>50</sup> More than 90 per cent of those surveyed in Turkey - the highest in any European country - stated that the Internet access is a fundamental right. In South Korea - the most wired country on earth - 96 per cent (highest) of the people believed that Internet access was a fundamental right. In Japan, Mexico and Russia around three-quarters of respondents said they could not do without it.

Recently, the EU adopted an Internet freedom provision, stating that any measures taken by Member States that may affect a citizen's access to or use of the Internet must respect the fundamental rights and freedoms of citizens. In particular, it states that EU citizens are entitled to a fair and impartial procedure before any measures can be taken to limit their net access.<sup>51</sup>

Indeed, more governments are beginning to regard Internet access as a utility. Monticello, a city in Minnesota even made headlines in June 2011 after a court ruled in favour of the town saying that Internet was a utility and that it could be financed as such.<sup>46</sup> With 44 per cent of all respondents telling the BBC that they simply cannot cope without Internet access, it is clear that there is still plenty of work to do in getting that 'fundamental right' to citizens of the world.<sup>52</sup> International bodies such as the UN are also pushing for universal net access.<sup>46</sup>

Unfortunately, this hypothesis applies solely to the developed world as developing countries do not use telecommunications to seek, receive, and impart information.<sup>13</sup> However, this does not invalidate the argument, rather it strengthens it: if the developing world is to be, in effect, excluded from the global dialogue that takes place online, it is in effect, an assurance that they will only continue to be developing. If the Internet is information and if information can be equated to power, then all those without access to information are in effect powerless. As expressed by Benjamin Disraeli, 'as a general rule the most successful man in life is the man who has the best information.'<sup>53</sup>

The second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century 'information society' may now be considered as running parallel to the 19<sup>th</sup> century 'industrial society', a striking feature of which is the spread of digital technology and the commodification of information; as a consequence, if the question of access to property and ownership of physical goods was a major issue in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, this became a question of access to property and the ownership of information in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.<sup>54</sup> Besides, since the rapid and broad extension of

transborder socio-economic and cultural exchange is another characteristic of daily life in the late 20<sup>th</sup> century industrialized societies, the effects of the said commodification are at the same time experienced on a worldwide basis.<sup>54</sup>

The European Union has, nevertheless, realized the importance for care and caution in any Internet related policy when dealing with countries with less robust fundamental rights protections.<sup>55</sup>

## Conclusion

Information by its very nature is not scarce. The reason information is grouped with other basic freedoms, such as freedom of speech and liberty is because, for the meaningful exercise of these rights, access to and use of information is essential. More so as imperfect distribution of information would necessarily negate the Constitutional objective of achieving social and economic justice, disrupt the material resources necessary for the attainment of socio-economic equality and necessarily lead to inequality of opportunity.

There are many unique challenges that are faced in this age of information. They stem from the nature of information itself. Information is the means through which the mind expands and increases its capacity to achieve its goals, often as the result of an input from another mind. Thus, information forms the intellectual capital from which human beings craft their lives and secure dignity. In short, revolution and freedom are central to the highest standards of human existence. As this message finds its way into unfamiliar hearts, the copyright industries hope to take more than they have ever been able to take in the past. This will be a clash worth watching, if only one was more than a mere spectator.

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  - 25 Developed for computer users whose vision loss prevents them from seeing screen content, JAWS reads aloud the content on the PC screen.
  - 26 Section 32 (1), Copyright Act, Canada: It is not an infringement of copyright for a person, at the request of a person with a perceptual disability, or for a non-profit organization acting for his or her benefit, to make a copy or sound recording of a literary, musical, artistic or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability; translate, adapt or reproduce in sign language a literary or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability; or perform in public a literary or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in sign language, either live or in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability; Limitation (2) Subsection (1) does not authorize the making of a large print book; Limitation (3) Subsection (1) does not apply where the work or sound recording is commercially available in a format specially designed to meet the needs of any person referred to in that subsection.
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- 34 Those with medical conditions such as cerebral palsy, dyslexia, multiple sclerosis or paralysis. It also includes those who cannot or have difficulty reading or hearing material as it is originally presented. Further 'perceptual disability' means a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes such a disability resulting from severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus or move one's eyes, the inability to hold or manipulate a book, or an impairment relating to comprehension (as described in the Canadian Copyright Act).
- 35 Department – related Parliamentary Standing Committee on Human Resource Development, 227<sup>th</sup> Report on The Copyright Amendment Bill, 2010 dated 23 November 2010, Parliament of India, Rajya Sabha, <http://copyright.gov.in/Documents/227-Copyrightamendment.pdf> (30 March 2012).
- 36 Analytical document on limitations and exceptions, prepared by the Secretariat, Standing Committee on Copyrights and Related Rights, Nineteenth Session, Geneva, 14-18 December 2009.
- 37 WIPO Treaty Approved for Blind, Visually Impaired and Other Reading Disabled, [http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc-details.jsp?doc\\_id=122732](http://www.wipo.int/meetings/en/doc-details.jsp?doc_id=122732) (13 March 2011).
- 38 <http://www.worldblindunion.org/en/> (23 March 2011).
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- 40 [http://www.wipo.int/documents/en/meetings/2003/digvi\\_im/pdf/digvi\\_im\\_03\\_mann.pdf](http://www.wipo.int/documents/en/meetings/2003/digvi_im/pdf/digvi_im_03_mann.pdf) (23 December 2010).
- 41 Chan Leslie *et al.*, Improving access to research literature in developing countries: Challenges and opportunities provided by open access, World Library and Information Congress: 71<sup>st</sup> IFLA General Conference and Council, 2005, Oslo, Norway, [http://repositorio.bce.unb.br/bitstream/10482/1009/1/EVENTO\\_ImprovingAccessResearchLiterature.pdf](http://repositorio.bce.unb.br/bitstream/10482/1009/1/EVENTO_ImprovingAccessResearchLiterature.pdf) (12 January 2012).
- 42 The Budapest Open Access Initiative (BOAI), recommends a two-pronged approach to OA scholarship – Self Archiving and Open Access Journals. OAJs means free availability of journals on the Internet, permitting the user to read, download, copy, distribute, print, search, or link to the full texts of these articles without financial, legal, or technical barriers. The only constraint identifiable on reproduction and distribution was that the authors be given control over the integrity of their work and their right properly acknowledged and cited.
- 43 Medknow, based in Chennai, India, is an excellent example, which publishes 73 fully open access journals, at no charge to the authors. Instead, the publications are supported by advertising and by charges for print copies (a useful supplement where Internet connectivity is sporadic). Medknow is not alone; Bioline International, which also distributes OA publications created in the developing world, hit 2.5 million articles downloaded by the end of 2006.
- 44 Chan Leslie and Costa Sely, Participation in the global knowledge commons: Challenges and opportunities for research dissemination in developing countries, *New Library World*, 106 (1210/1211) (2005) 141-163.
- 45 This was famously suggested by European Commission Vice-President M Viviane Reding.
- 46 [http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/08\\_03\\_10\\_BBC\\_internet\\_poll.pdf](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/bsp/hi/pdfs/08_03_10_BBC_internet_poll.pdf) (30 March 2011).
- 47 Government regulation of the Internet ended up being a somewhat divisive issue among those surveyed, however. A little more than half agreed that the Internet should never be regulated by any level of government, though certain regions had significantly differing opinions on the topic. For example, China, Thailand, Indonesia, and much of Europe either 'somewhat' or 'strongly' disagreed with such a statement. Conversely, users in Mexico, Nigeria, and South Korea were heavily against government regulation. The US fell mostly in the middle, with 57 per cent against government regulation. Other interesting statistics include the claim by 85 per cent of Japanese Internet users and 81 per cent in Mexico that they would not be able to 'cope without the Internet', while 55 per cent of Brits and most other European nations believe that the Internet should be regulated by governments in at least some way.
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- 52 <http://arstechnica.com/telecom/news/2010/03/80-say-net-access-fundamental-right-split-on-regulation.ars> (7 April 2011).
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- 54 Grosheide Willem F, Copyright issues and the information society: Dutch perspectives, *Electronic Journal of Comparative Law*, 6 (4) (December 2002), <http://www.ejcl.org/64/art64-13.html> (15 September 2011).
- 55 Article 21, The Treaty on European Union.