

US trade associations unite to protect intellectual property globally

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The worlds of entertainment, art, medicine and technology have joined together to address the significant international challenges to their intellectual property, and thereby enhance innovation and creativity in their fields.

The American Creative, Technology and Innovative Organisations Network – known as 'ACTION for Trade' – has been formed in order to develop an international market that "rewards innovation and protects creative assets". Its first focus is on ensuring that upcoming talks about the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA) affirm the enforcement of IP rights as a precedent for future trade agreements.

According to the ACTION for Trade website, internationally intellectual property is "routinely undervalued or even stolen" in a global market with an uneven playing field. "Amid ongoing talks to renegotiate the North American Free Trade Agreement, it's critical for America's trade negotiators to make sure the agreement rewards innovation and protects the creative assets developed by U.S. creators and innovators", the network states. "Improving NAFTA will help ensure that our workers and economy prosper."

Member organisations include the Author's Guild, the Biotechnology Innovation Organisation, the Motion Picture Association of America, the Entertainment Software Association, Qualcomm, Oracle, the Recording Industry Association of America (RIAA), the International Anti-counterfeiting Coalition and the Pharmaceutical Research and Manufacturers of America (PhRMA).

PhRMA issued a statement noting that "intellectual property rights are critical to protecting America's place as the global leader in biopharmaceutical innovation". It emphasised that "strong IP protections are necessary to maintain the substantial investments being made by the biopharmaceutical industry to develop the next generation of treatments and cures to address the world's most pressing public health challenges".

Similarly, the US film and television industry depends on its intellectual property in reaching 130 countries. The Motion Picture Association of America added that its 2 million US employees generate a positive trade surplus of \$13.3 billion.

The Entertainment Software Association highlighted that the gaming industry has 2 billion consumers globally and relies heavily on its IP rights, as well as on market access and free cross-border data streams.

Recording artists have survived the transformation of product delivery from physical records to music streaming because of their ability to enforce their intellectual property domestically. However, RIAA emphasised that international protection for such rights is required for the digital music services of the future.

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