



## Intellectual Property Training in the Field of Photography and Media in Bulgarian Universities

Tereza Trencheva <sup>1</sup>, Kamelia Planska <sup>2</sup>, Evelina Zdravkova <sup>3</sup>

### Abstract

*In the modern era, called "information society" (already transformed as a knowledge society), we have witnessed the rapid development of human intellectual activity, with the result that produces unique creative results products to personal creativity and the innovativeness of the human personality. Exactly this kind of creative goods provoke the development of Intellectual Property (IP). IP is directly related to the information, which contains in the objects themselves. In other words, the IP is the ownership of the information, which intellectual products contain themselves, and their creators and legal possessors have full ownership of them.*

*Developing with an unusually rapid pace, the contemporary Information Technologies and based on them Internet is a phenomenon not only in geographical but also in socio-legal sense. The Internet is changing the familiar socio-economic paradigms, and IP rights are no exception to this.*

*IP is one of the main aspects of the knowledge based economy. In the age of media and the Internet more prominent place takes the IP training. On one hand photographic images are IP subjects and are under copyright protection. On the other hand according to the Copyright and Related Rights Law news, facts and information are not IP objects, but there are a lot of photographic images, used in them.*

*The present report aims to outline the main interactions between the media business and photography and what is the role and application of IP training. A review of the universities which advocates the IP teaching aimed at photography and media; the need of copyright protection knowledge to these sites is considered - photography and media information; the contents of the IP curricula is traced; the benefits, advantages and disadvantages of training with IP in the field of Media and Photography is outlined.*

### 1. Introduction

In the theoretical literature there are many definitions and interpretations of Intellectual Property (IP), which are constantly evolving with the change of technology. By itself IP, very broadly, means the legal rights which result from intellectual activity in the industrial, scientific, literary and artistic fields.

Generally speaking, IP Law aims to safeguard creators and other producers of intellectual goods and services by granting them certain time-limited rights to control the use made of those productions. Those rights do not apply to the physical object in which the creation may be embodied but instead to the intellectual creation as such.

Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) must be seen as objective and subjective right courses and science. On IPRs, as objectively existing law, in the legal science there is no single opinion. The new information environment imposes new requirements on the competences and adequate knowledge of modern young professionals, graduated their higher education and this is especially true for the professional fields related to Public Communication and Visual Art, as currently these professional fields are one of the most dynamically developing. The main spheres of realization of these specialists are: regional and national media, institutions, governmental and non-governmental organizations, and the use of information and photographs is the basis of their professional activity and a necessary condition for their successful realization is that they need to be well informed on the issues of the IP protection.

IP can be considered as an element of information literacy in university information environment as to be successful students at the university, and in life, they must learn to use efficiently and effectively the wide variety of information and communication technologies for searching, finding, arranging, analysing and assessing the information they need [1].

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<sup>1</sup> University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT), Bulgaria

<sup>2</sup> University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT), Bulgaria

<sup>3</sup> University of Library Studies and Information Technologies (ULSIT), Bulgaria



## 2. Goal, research tasks and methodology of the study

The purpose of the study is to present the contemporary condition of IPRs training in educational and qualification degree "Bachelor" and "Master" of Media and Photography Specialties in Bulgaria. In view of specificity and completeness of the presented information in this publication there is a limit, which refers to the training only in educational and qualification degree "Bachelor" and "Master". To achieve the objective are set out the following major **research tasks**, outlining the methodology of the study: 1. Presentation of IP as part of the Students' Information Literacy; 2. Exploration, presentation and comparative analysis of the curriculums of many universities in Bulgaria in these specialties; 3. Conclusions and recommendations. **The methodology** for achieving the objective of the study and solving the set research tasks include the following specific methods: method of study and content analysis, comparative analysis; synthesis of the obtained information. Accent is put on the disciplines which are important for Photography and Media students and are related to the different IP aspects.

## 3. IP as Part of the Information Literacy at the University Environment of the Photography and Media Students

Information Literacy (IL) is defined in Alexandria declaration as *"an opportunity for people of different social status and occupation effectively seek, evaluate, use and create information in order to achieve their personal, social, occupational and educational goals"*. Information literate people know how to find, evaluate and use information effectively to solve a problem or to decide whether the information comes from the computer, book, news agency, media, film or just a photography.

The IP importance in the modern world goes beyond the protection of works of the mind, as it affects all aspects of economic and cultural life. Today the advantage is on that who creates, stores, and uses information and that advantage is much greater than the holder of the property rights - even of the property right of real estate. As a result, education in the field of IP at the university level is increasingly used in educational programs.

In the economy based on knowledge, an important place take experts who can interpret issues related to IP, such as information specialists, journalists, photographers and etc. They bear the responsibility for creating a policy of promoting the understanding and resolution of legal disputes and conflicts that are unique to this aspect of the information society. One way to achieve this is through the educational impact of educational programs, which include issues related to IP as part of the curriculum.

IP can be considered as an element of information literacy in university environment, because in order to develop successfully students in the university and in life, they must understand the ethics of the use of information, including the violation of individual rights to IP as plagiarism use without permission of the author of works of literature and art [2].

## 4. The Role of IP Educational Programs Photography and Media Students

Using the Internet as a communication and information tool helps audiovisual media to find their audience online, 24 hours per day. Internet is used both in the Media and in Professional Photography (Photojournalism, Art Photography). IP Training (whether in the form of mandatory or elective courses) in Media and Photography is crucial for businesses with documentary information in the era of Internet. Universities offer curricula that prepare the future journalists and photographers to work in their specialty, but do not pay attention to their IP Training. Often such courses are missing, which is one of the shortcomings in Journalism and Mass Communications and Photography Teaching, which determines the relevance of this topic. Media products and photo reportages in electronic form are the subject of plagiarism and piracy, because are spread through the network, and many of its users are not familiar with legal regulations, or have knowledge of copyright-aspect, but risk and violate the IPRs of authors. Discussing the topic of protection of intellectual labor and giving examples of abuse makes not only the students but also other users of media information to understand the importance of IP knowledge, what are its aspects, importance and usefulness in practice. Insufficient training of students at IPRs is a prerequisite when they already have graduated and are in the labor market to attend IP-related seminars, which witnessed the need for such training during their studies at the University.

## 5. IP Education in the field of Photography and Media in Bulgaria

For the purposes of this research we have studied the universities in Bulgaria, which provide training in 'Media' and 'Photography'. In this study we aim to gain information in which educational and qualification degree are offered these specialties and if there are components in the content of the



curriculum, which point out some IPRs aspects. As a source of information have been used official websites of the respective universities.

### 5.1 Study Results

The number of accredited universities in the Republic of Bulgaria for 2016 is 51. For the purpose of the report is done online survey, whose objects are the curricula of courses in professional fields "Visual Arts" and "Public Communications and Information Sciences." As a result of the study are outlined the following results:

- **Out of 51 universities in Bulgaria, 10 offer training related to Media** (1. American University in Bulgaria; 2. Bourgas Free University; 3. University of Veliko Tarnovo "St. St. Cyril and Methodius"; 4. Higher School of Insurance and Finance; 5. National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts "Krastyo Sarafov"; 6. New Bulgarian University; 7. Sofia University "St. St. Kliment Ohridski"; 8. University of National and World Economy; 9. South-West University "Neophyte Rilski"; 10. Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski"). In nine undergraduate programs in professional field "Public Communication and Information Sciences" specialty Journalism is offered in the form of mandatory or elective disciplines related with Intellectual Property. From 23 graduate programs in Journalism, in 10 academic plans is included training in IP compulsory or elective. In one university is offered e-Learning in several undergraduate programs and a general education profile journalism. Continuing education in the specialty "Journalism" offer two universities in the country [4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 11, 12, 14, 16].
- **From 51 universities in Bulgaria, 7 offer training in Photography** in professional field of "Visual Arts" - four undergraduate programs and seven masters (1. Varna Free University "Chernorizets Hrabar"; 2. National Academy for Theatre and Film Arts "Krastyo Sarafov"; 3. National Art Academy; 4. New Bulgarian University; 5. Sofia University "St. St. Kliment Ohridski"; 6. Shumen University "Bishop Konstantin Preslavski"; 7. Technical University - Sofia). Only one of undergraduate programs are taught discipline Economic and legal aspects of photography, and in the master's programs are lacking. One of the seven universities is offered e-learning photography, and three of them offer so-called. continuing education [3, 6, 7, 8, 9, 12, 17].

### 6. Conclusion

The information technologies development and their use in all sectors of business, the use of information products and global network, the IP importance are prerequisites for the development of the Information Society. The dynamic development of public communications and visual arts requires future professionals to be competent and adequate in terms of changing information environment. The training of students in undergraduate and graduate programs in the field of Journalism and Mass Communications and Professional Photography is crucial for distribution and marketing of media and photographic information. As news reports and photos are intellectual products that can be abused by third parties. Universities have to train future professionals in various fields, to provide them with the necessary knowledge in various fields. In Bulgaria the University of National and World Economy and Sofia University "St. Kliment Ohridski", offer quality IP training. Studying IP except that introduces students to the specifics of legal protection and teaches them how to protect their intellectual work to be ethical and to respect the work of colleagues in their industry, increase their IL. One disadvantage is that quite curricula in specialties of directions "Public Communications and Information Science" and "Visual Arts", which studied Journalism and Photography are missing IP training, which is premised on the inadequacy of future professionals and their information illiteracy to IPRs.

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