The <indecs>2RDD Project

Summary

- **<indecs>2RDD** is a project to develop a multimedia Rights Data Dictionary, that will support the practical interoperability of different metadata models, descriptive, legal and financial semantics and rights expression languages This is an essential infrastructural building block for digital rights management systems, whereby the value of proprietary technology will be enhanced and the management and protection of rights made interoperable.

- **<indecs>2RDD** builds on and extends the proven success of the <indecs> project, which defined a framework for interoperable metadata in content-based e-commerce.

- **<indecs>2RDD** will facilitate the mapping of proprietary DRM solutions onto a common data layer thus expanding interoperability and, as a result, expanding the potential application of DRM Technology by Rights Holders.

- The output of **<indecs>2RDD** will be offered as input to the MPEG process, in response to the MPEG 21 Call for Proposals for a Rights Data Dictionary; responses are due by 21st November 2001. Its value will extend to any activity requiring open standards solutions for rights management.

Consortium Membership

Accenture
ContentGuard
Dentsu (Melodies and Memories Global)
EDItEUR
Enpia Systems (Korea)
International DOI Foundation
Motion Picture Association (MPA)
Recording Industry Association of America – International Federation of the Phonographic Industry (RIAA-IFPI)

Rightscom, the London based digital rights strategy consultancy, has been contracted to provide technical and project management.

Background

A number of recent projects and proposals for projects have recognized the need for standard ways of expressing information about intellectual property rights in the machine-to-machine network environment. These proposals have typically focused on a relatively small segment of the overall problem, such as consumer access to music and eBooks.

What these projects appear commonly to have overlooked is the need to deal with the totality of rights in order to control user permissions. Unless a standard set of semantics is developed, DRM systems will be forced to interpret expressions that may describe the same rights but use different vocabulary. Given the vast number of rights holders, this can only result in a contractual chaos, which would inevitably bring DRM systems themselves into unjustified disrepute and engender endless disputes.

The fundamental challenge is that intellectual property rights do not operate in a discrete space. Not only is "rights management" a continuum from creator to user, but media convergence also mandates that rights management solutions must look beyond individual media sectors to cover the IP industries as a whole. And as usage permissions innately rely on the nature of the original rights granted, unless there is a machine-readable continuum the entire process of automated rights transactions will be jeopardized.

Common semantics do not in themselves resolve questions of rights ownership and legal interpretation. However, a robust, standardised set of **commerce** semantics can remove many of the layers of unnecessary complication and miscommunication.

The major players in this sector, such as ContentGuard, InterTrust, Microsoft and IBM, have each developed some kind of system for dealing with permissions. Indeed ContentGuard, as the inheritor of Xerox's DPRL language development, has now released XrML, (eXtensible Rights Markup Language), specifically to deal with such permissions; among other proposals there is XMCL (eXtensible Media Commerce Language) from RealNetworks and ODRL (Open Digital Rights Language) from IPR Systems of Australia.

During the last 12 months a number of attempts have been made to develop a model that would bring together all interested parties in an effort to move rights management standardisation efforts forward, specifically to create an understanding of the "rights continuum".

The <indecs> project provided the basis for a powerful (and widely respected) underlying analysis of the requirements for rights management metadata. However, <indecs> (as was always anticipated) did not complete work in the area of rights semantics. Sufficient market impetus has now developed for active work to begin in applying the <indecs> analysis in detail to rights management. This is the task to be addressed by the **<indecs>2RDD** Consortium.