

BPF on local content: a proposal for its continuity in 2020

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The 2019 BPF on local content decided to extend the scope of its issues, with special emphasis on preservation and promotion of languages and heritage under conditions in which cultural and linguistic diversity, artefacts and histories are sometimes at risk as a result of political and social shifts and upheavals

As was raised during the discussion in the BPF session in Berlin, beside the problem of the access to the Internet, the other tough goal is to make possible to all citizens of the world to access to local or regional contents and services. Not to make accessible global contents and services everywhere.

In this sense emerged in Berlin a clear need to enlarge the reflection of this BPF on how copyright and content protection could become tools to preserve and protect local creativity and community of authors, and not (as it has happened till today) as a form to impose external cultures and cultural goods across all the world

. We have reason to think that the main issues taken up in 2019 are still very pertinent for the continuation of this BPF in 2020.

Among them:

- Practices demonstrating the benefits and risks of enforcing author (or community) rights on cultural assets.

- State support to creation in all cultural fields is central (incidentally, this already happens in nearly all developed countries and is even a major export item in several of their economies).

- How the UNESCO convention on cultural diversity may impact on fair trade of cultural goods.

- A reflection on the various mechanisms of public support to local content production: not only State aids and grants, but also other indirect mechanisms such as quotas of local production, obligation to reinvest locally part of profits of multinational companies, stimulus to public service media.

- Consider cases which illustrate how and how much Internet platforms contribute to the production and circulation of local content to the benefit of local/national cultures.

- Development of local capacities for proper digitization of local content, including an enabling environment to secure digital assets while minimizing barriers to their broad use.

- Development of local capacities to use cryptography for protection of sensitive content. Include the creative use of local networks and encrypted tools by communities to protect their content without renouncing to broader communication in a safer way. This includes the free use of locally available spectrum to effectively enable community networks and media.

The BPF on local contents continues to be an opportunity to reflect about these issues, some of which go beyond enabling production of local culture. A summary of recommendations of the 2019 BPF is relevant:

- With the onslaught of imposed development discourses and practices, with limited ability to shield vulnerable local communities from their impact, we need to devise ways to mitigate and altogether stop the dilution of local specificities in the name of global modernity.

- Build up the repository of indigenous populations and cultures, through safe networking as a tool to preserve knowledge, enhance cultural assets, including enhancing capacity for digitalization of local assets.

- Local governments and administrations should respect and foster free/libre and open source software (FLOSS) and promote local technologies.

- Encourage appropriate, localized, eco-responsible technologies compatible with local values and that do not enforce dominant biases.

- Advocate for public policies which effectively preserve local indigenous languages, with adequate planning, effective government support and supporting budget.

- Effective policy is needed to support digitalization of existing archives and historical records along with resource-based and economic support for researchers and technicians working on documenting and disseminating diverse local languages and cultural heritage and traditions. Public/state media infrastructure should join these efforts.

- Active participation of speakers in the use, documentation, dissemination and revitalization of their own languages is essential.

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