

The Institute for Policy Innovation

Sixth Annual World Intellectual Property Day Forum

Event Recap



▲ WIPO's Deputy Director General James Pooley kicked off the morning confronting speculation over the value of patents as incentives to innovation, noting that the IP system is not merely about incentivizing new creations but also enables innovation to be brought to market. Pooley concluded his remarks by emphasizing how patents are a "fundamental pillar" to a growing economy.

Over one hundred creators, policy makers, industry insiders, embassy representatives, and members of the press packed the room for IPI's 6th annual World Intellectual Property Day event on April 26, 2011 to learn the latest on what is being done to protect the spark of innovation both domestically and abroad, as well as the current threats to innovation. ▼

To watch the video of each panel or keynote click on the hot spot.



◀ IPI adjunct fellow Solveig Singleton presented new research demonstrating that holders of traditional knowledge (TK) from communities around the world should consider availing themselves of IP protections to benefit from the commercialization of TK. Joining Singleton, Dr. Mary Palmer ▶ discussed her efforts to commercialize botanically derived therapies native to Belize with the goal of developing them for a mass market through her company, ToxEM, LLC, and sharing the benefits with Belize.



▶ IPI's Chris Israel also released new research detailing how IP protection is driving clean technology by providing security for venture capital firms, and supports the global diffusion of clean technologies through technology transfer.

◀ GE's Thaddeus Burns joined Israel to provide industry perspective on trends and policy challenges regarding green tech breakthroughs, saying the US market's ability to create green tech jobs relies on the ability to protect IP.





◀ Another panel featured Assistant Secretary of State Jose W. Fernandez, Peggy Bulger ▶ of the Library of Congress American Folklife Center, and Randy Cohen ▶ of Americans for the Arts. Fernandez reported on the State Department's efforts to partner with foreign governments to combat counterfeiting and promote entrepreneurship to foster innovation and business development. Cohen discussed not only how artists leverage IP to impact society and culture, but through their artistry create 5.7 million jobs and generate \$166 billion in US economic activity each year



▼ Erik Barnett from U.S. Immigrations and Customs Enforcement (ICE) described their efforts to rein in rogue websites with "Operation in our Sites," a campaign to seize rogue websites and raise public awareness of the harm caused by infringers. The bottom line, said Barnett: "Property theft costs jobs."

▲ In a panel moderated by author Andrew Keen, Los Angeles-based graphic novelist Doug TenNapel and the Copyright Alliance's Sandra Aistars discussed the threats posed to creativity by copyright infringement. Aistars emphasized the need for legislation to protect both consumers and creators from rogue websites, and also praised the proliferation of legitimate sites that allow consumers to access content and services online (e.g. Amazon, Hulu, and Netflix.)



▶ A panel of industry insiders then offered their views on rogue website legislation as well as patent reform, both pending in Congress. The panel included Jonathan Zuck of the Association for Competitive Technology, Steve Tepp of the US Chamber of Commerce's Global IP Center, Phil Wadsworth of Qualcomm, Inc. and Philip Johnson of Johnson & Johnson.

"Industries are dying from counterfeiting and piracy," said Tepp. "We need legislative action to cut foreign rogue websites off from the US market to protect consumers and save jobs."

Zuck also noted that while the Internet has been beneficial for small businesses by putting their websites on equal par with that of larger businesses, Zuck noted the challenge in that the same kind of "equalizer effect" also occurs when illegitimate websites are created that look legitimate. "Modernizing the process of customs enforcement in the Internet era is an extremely appropriate role for government," said Zuck. "Every conversation about this has to begin with the fact that the status quo is untenable."



Both Johnson and Wadsworth emphasized the need for the US patent system to be improved, saying the delays in patent examination and issuance—which takes five to seven years for a patent to be granted—harms the American economy and erodes the proper rewards to innovation.

When asked of his thoughts on the probability of a patent reform bill succeeding in the current legislative session, Wadsworth said: "While there's still some dissent on some of the key provisions, it remains to be seen at the end of the day if it will be passed in its present form. The main thing is fee diversion and funding of the patent office, so for sure if a bill came out with just that in it, it would pass."