

Title:

Mr

Forename:

Andrew

Surname:

Wilson

Representing:

Organisation

Organisation (if applicable):

University of Brighton

What do you want Ofcom to keep confidential?:

Keep nothing confidential

If you want part of your response kept confidential, which parts?:

Ofcom may publish a response summary:

Yes

I confirm that I have read the declaration:

Yes

Ofcom should only publish this response after the consultation has ended:

You may publish my response on receipt

Additional comments:

The University of Brighton has a long and distinguished history in Brighton and in Eastbourne and its origins can be traced back to 1859. In 1971 it was one of the first polytechnics to be designated and in 1992 it was granted its university title. The Brighton and Sussex Medical School – a partnership with the University of Sussex and the NHS – and the University Centre Hastings were opened in 2003. The University has an annual budget of

£165m and has 21,000 students and 2,600 staff and operates across 5 campuses and 6 residential sites.

The University of Brighton adopts the response of Universities UK, subject to some further observations below.

Question 3.1: Do you agree that Copyright Owners should only be able to take advantage of the online copyright infringement procedures set out in the DEA and the Code where they have met their obligations under the Secretary of State's Order under section 124 of the 2003 Act? Please provide supporting arguments.:

We agree with the proposal that copyright owners should only be able to take advantage of the procedures when they have met their obligations under the Secretary of State's Order. In our view this is necessary to prevent false accusations.

Question 3.2: Is two months an appropriate lead time for the purposes of planning ISP and Copyright Owner activity in a given notification period? If a notification period is significantly more or less than a year, how should the lead time be varied? Please provide supporting evidence of the benefits of an alternative lead time.:

Two months is sufficient for a qualifying ISP to plan activity with a Qualifying Copyright owner, but will not be sufficient for an ISP not currently covered by the Code if Ofcom changes its rules to include that ISP and we would highlight to you the observations of JANET in this regard that 6-9 months is a more appropriate timescale where an ISP has to move from non-qualifying to qualifying status.

Question 3.3: Do you agree with Ofcom's approach to the application of the Code to ISPs? If not, what alternative approach would you propose? Can you provide evidence in support of any alternative you propose?:

A critical issues for this University is whether it will be defined as an "Internet Service Provider" ("provides an internet access service")
"Subscriber" (an entity who "receives an internet access service")
or "Communications Provider" for the purposes of the Act.

We are very concerned that the University could be viewed as a "subscriber" by a copyright holder or a qualifying ISP upon approval of the Ofcom codes by parliament. Universities have public policy goals to educate and research, as well as promote the digital inclusion agenda. The University already takes the issue of copyright infringement very seriously and has already implemented practical policies and acceptable user terms aimed at minimising online copyright infringement.

Given these low levels of infringement across our networks we are very concerned that being

viewed as a “subscriber” and becoming embroiled in the appeals process, is not proportionate to the intentions of government as stated in S.124E(1)k of the Act. This further regulatory burden is not appropriate given the existing responsibilities for teaching, learning and widening participation in Higher Education.

Given the public policy role of our institution combined with the fact we act as neutral and “mere conduits” for internet access, not knowingly facilitating infringement, we believe our institution should be viewed either as a communications provider, and therefore exempt, or as a non-qualifying category as allowed for by S. 5.124C 3(a).

Question 3.4: Do you agree with the proposed qualification criteria for the first notification period under the Code, and the consequences for coverage of the ISP market, appropriate? If not, what alternative approaches would you propose? Can you provide evidence in support of any alternative you propose?:

Whilst it is obviously sensible to include the biggest ISPs and in particular domestic providers in the code, until the criteria for what is an ISP and what is a subscriber are clarified, it is impossible to judge whether Ofcom’s general approach is sensible or not.

Question 3.5: Do you agree with Ofcom’s approach to the application of the 2003 Act to ISPs outside the initial definition of Qualifying ISP? If you favour an alternative approach, can you provide detail and supporting evidence for that approach?:

The suggestion that public intermediaries such as universities, libraries or schools will have to collect at some point in the future address details from all users is onerous on those organisations and users, and is contrary to the Government policy of encouraging people to use the Internet and to develop their digital literacy. This appears to be a major policy shift, and one that has not been approved by Ministers or debated in Parliament. This, together with the potential costs of implementing new measures to remain within the DEA, and technical measures to reduce risks of infringement, as well as potentially 25% of costs associated with potential infringements could lead to some libraries or education institutions no longer offering wifi or other types of Internet connections to their patrons, which totally defeats the Government’s intention of a Digital Britain.

Question 3.6: Do you agree with Ofcom’s approach to the application of the Act to subscribers and communications providers? If you favour alternative approaches, can you provide detail and supporting evidence for those approaches?:

No.

As outlined above from implementation of secondary legislation it is likely that we will be viewed as a “subscriber” by ISPs and copyright holders and therefore be subject to copyright infringement reports and the appeals process. Potentially also in the future the

imposition of technical measures aimed at slowing or potentially temporarily disconnecting “subscribers” from the internet. Given our educational role, combined with our role as a “mere conduit” not knowingly facilitating infringement, brings us to the conclusion that being classed as “subscriber” is wholly inappropriate.

At the same time the lack of clarity in the definitions of the Act as applied to the University of Brighton will mean we have to plan for at some point potentially being classed as a “qualifying ISP”. This will have significant cost and overhead implications for the organisation, ranging from legal advice, policy decisions, through to workflow and technical systems alterations.

Question 4.1: Do you agree with the proposed content of CIRs? If not, what do you think should be included or excluded, providing supporting evidence in each case?:

We suggest that the following wording is added to the CIRs “and that to the best of the owner’s knowledge the copying is of a substantial part of the work, and that the copying does not fall under any of the exceptions to copyright as provided for in the Copyright, Designs and Patents Act.” This change is to ensure that the copyright owner considers the question whether the copying, even if unauthorised, might be covered by one of the exceptions in the law.

We further recommend that the owner is required to provide supporting evidence that it is the owner of the copyright in the material in question, and that it provides an indemnity to the ISP and to any subscribers affected that should it turn out that it is not, in fact, the owner the copyright in question that it will refund all costs incurred by the ISP and/or subscribers as a result of its complaint.

Question 4.2: Do you agree with our proposal to use a quality assurance approach to address the accuracy and robustness of evidence gathering? If you believe that an alternative approach would be more appropriate please explain, providing supporting evidence.:

Yes

Question 4.3: Do you agree that it is appropriate for Copyright Owners to be required to send CIRs within 10 working days of evidence being gathered? If not, what time period do you believe to be appropriate and why?:

Yes

Question 5.1: Do you agree with our proposals for the treatment of invalid CIRs? If you favour an alternative approach, please provide supporting arguments.:

No. It is important that one reason for not processing a CIR is that the network upon which an infringement is alleged to have taken place is the network of an excluded category / not a subscriber.

Question 5.2: Do you agree with our proposal to use a quality assurance approach to address the accuracy and robustness of subscriber identification? If not, please give reasons. If you believe that an alternative approach would be more appropriate please explain, providing supporting evidence.:

Yes

Question 5.3: Do you agree with our proposals for the notification process? If not, please give reasons. If you favour an alternative approach, please provide supporting arguments. :

Subscribers that are institutional or organisational, such as public intermediaries are likely to be targeted if they have several employees or students who have been infringing copyright across their networks. This risks serious harm to public intermediaries which may find themselves being inappropriately viewed as “in scope” of the Act for the activities of their users – activity which they have no knowledge or responsibility.

Question 5.4: Do you believe we should add any additional requirements into the draft code for the content of the notifications? If so, can you provide evidence as to the benefits of adding those proposed additional requirements? Do you have any comments on the draft illustrative notification (cover letters and information sheet) in Annex 6?:

We recommend that Ofcom ensure that public intermediaries cannot be the recipients of such codes.

Question 6.1: Do you agree with the threshold we are proposing? Do you agree with the frequency with which Copyright Owners may make requests? If not, please provide reasons. If you favour an alternative approach, please provide supporting evidence for that approach. :

We recommend that ISPs have longer than 5 days to respond to a request by a copyright owner.

Question 7.1: Do you agree with Ofcom's approach to subscriber appeals in the Code? If not, please provide reasons. If you would like to propose an alternative approach, please provide supporting evidence on the benefits of that approach.:

We believe that the appeals process might be helped by giving in-scope subscribers more information about their grounds for appeal and their rights under the Data Protection Act

Question 8.1: Do you agree with Ofcom's approach to administration, enforcement, dispute resolution and information gathering in the Code? If not, please provide reasons. If you favour an alternative approach, please provide supporting evidence on the benefits of that approach.:

We have no problems with the proposed approach to administration, enforcement and dispute resolution as long as they are proportionate and make a de facto exclusion for public intermediaries who are a crucial conduit for online education and access to knowledge in the digital world.