



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

October 28, 2016

MPA SEMINAR HIGHLIGHTS PRESSING NEED TO PROTECT CREATIVE CONTENT AS RESEARCH REVEALS 31% OF JAPANESE INVOLVED IN PIRACY

TOKYO/SINGAPORE – On October 28, UNIJAPAN and Motion Picture Association (MPA), with support from the Embassy of the United States of America and the Federation of Japanese Films Industry (FJFI), co-hosted the annual MPA Seminar at the Tokyo International Film Festival (TIFF), where distinguished representatives from the film industry promoted a number of important initiatives to combat online copyright infringement.

Responding to recent research that 31 percent of Japanese Internet users were involved in some form of movie or TV piracy in 2015, Japanese and international guest speakers provided persuasive economic evidence for robust copyright laws in the digital age, and shared global best practice on the most effective measures to prevent online video piracy.

Welcoming guests to the seminar, Yasushi Shiina, Director General, TIFF & TIFFCOM, said that the MPA Seminar had become an important addition to the annual film festival, noting “Today’s forum should help give direction to the future of Japanese and international film businesses as they develop, produce and distribute quality film and television content for Japanese and global audiences.”

Nicholas Hill, Minister Counselor for Economic Affairs, Embassy of the United States of America, said, “Japan and the U.S. share common values and principles. We share the idea of creating and distributing ideas and the right to own what you create. More content is available to more people than ever before in the digital ecosystem. Disruption within the industry is inevitable. The very structure of the business is changing. How do we ensure that creators can create new content and maintain their ability to retain control of their copyright? Among the benefits of the TPP, there are mechanisms that help protect IP rights. These protections based on high standard international norms should help countries export their work into other markets.”

Setsuo Iuchi, Secretary-General, Intellectual Property Strategy Headquarters (IPSH), Cabinet Office, said, “The environment for distributing movies is drastically changing. There are diverse devices allowing more ways to enjoy entertainment. The positive is you can enjoy films anytime, anywhere.

But it also allows digital piracy to grow. IPSH put together an intellectual property plan for 2016 to strengthen the protection of copyright which is intended to counter infringement wherever possible.”

Akira Amari, Member of the House of Representatives, provided a message to the Seminar attendees, saying, “Film is playing an important role in exporting Japanese culture around the world. MPA is leading the global efforts to protect IP. This will prove useful for informing our local industry and together we can develop the best possible strategy to enhance the digital ecosystem.”

This year’s keynote speech was delivered by Executive Producer and Director of CBS television series *Elementary*, John Polson, who shared his experience from his first role as an actor at 17 to executive producing and directing some of the highest profile television shows in the U.S. “The best way to get a good idea is to have enough ideas,” said Polson, sharing some of the sayings that had left a lasting impression on him as a creative producer. “There’s really nothing more important than the rights of your content. Making sure your content is treated with the same respect as automobiles, or any other property. In this digital renaissance, it is more important than ever that these rights are protected. Everybody in our crew, on our team, this is their livelihood and how they feed their families. What is being done to protect creative rights around the world is tremendously important.”

Mike Ellis, President and Managing Director Asia Pacific, MPA, introduced the second half of the seminar that focused on the need for robust copyright laws to prevent large-scale online piracy. Alerting the audience to the size of the problem, Ellis said, “31% of Japanese Internet users were involved in some form of movie or TV piracy in 2015. The majority used P2P or host/cyberlocker pirate sites. This is big, and this is wrong. To give you some global context, piracy frequency rates in Australia (often in the headlines for its piracy problem) dropped from 29% in 2014, to 25% in 2015.”

Takayuki Tsukasaki, Secretary General, Director of Intellectual Property Protection Centre, Attorney at Law, The Content Overseas Distribution Association (CODA), said, “Young people are installing apps into their phones to access over 60 ‘leech’ sites that we need to counter. It is a major problem. CODA requests Google to not allow these sites to come up in search. We make requests to Apple and Google to have these apps deleted, which they do. However more apps pop up one after the other. The infringement continues. We have to look at how we can limit what content these applications are accessing. We should show the world that we will do what we need to do to protect Japanese content.”

Presenting on the subject of how best to develop a healthy and prosperous digital video ecosystem, Mike Weatherley, Vice President, Motion Picture Licensing Company (International), Ltd., who acted as UK Prime Minister David Cameron’s Intellectual Property Advisor, said, “Site Blocking has been put in place by a large number of countries now. The Internet has not been ‘broken’ and free speech or secrecy of communications has not been restricted. Apart from being the morally right thing to do, it seems that site blocking can be proved to be working. It is not the only way to best the pirates and nor should it be – we need a complete and comprehensive approach. But it is a very effective tool.

The number of countries that allow (court ordered) site blocking now numbers 25. And very soon the number of countries taking part in court ordered site blocking will not be listed by those doing it but list by those *not* doing it. I would urge Japan to be on the list of countries actively being part of the ISP blocking process.”

Dr. George S. Ford, Chief Economist of the Phoenix Center for Advanced Legal and Public Policy Studies, said, “The purpose of my paper – *Fair Use in the Digital Age* – was to look to economic theory to better understand how laws should change in response to the profound technological changes that we describe as *the digital age*.” In markets with high rates of online piracy, Ford concludes, “There is no evidence, of which I am aware, that shows expanded fair dealing or switching to fair use has positive economic impacts. All the evidence points to the contrary.”

In closing the panel discussion with Mr. Weatherley and Dr. Ford and Mr. Tsukasaki, Tomohiro Tohyama, Attorney at law, Partner, TMI Associates, said that the Japanese Government should urgently consider various measures outlined by the speakers to address the high volume of piracy in Japan.

View images from the event [here](#).

Download infographics (in both English & Japanese):

- [Japan Piracy Landscape](#)
- [Fair Use in the Digital Age](#)
- [Preventing Online Copyright Infringement in Japan](#)

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About the MPA:

Promoting & Protecting Screen Communities in Asia Pacific

The Motion Picture Association (MPA) and the Motion Picture Association International (MPA-I) represent the interests of the six international producers and distributors of filmed entertainment. To do so, they promote and protect the intellectual property rights of these companies and conduct public awareness programs to highlight to movie fans around the world the importance of content protection. These activities have helped to transform entire markets benefiting film and television industries in each country including foreign and local filmmakers alike.

The organizations act on behalf of the members of the Motion Picture Association of America, Inc (MPAA) which include; Paramount Pictures Corporation; Sony Pictures Entertainment Inc.; Twentieth Century Fox Film Corporation; Universal City Studios LLC; Walt Disney Studios Motion Pictures; and Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc. The MPA and the MPA-I have worldwide operations which are directed from their head offices in Los Angeles and Washington, D.C. and overseen in the Asia Pacific by a team based in Singapore. For more information about the MPA and the MPA-I, please visit www.mpa-i.org.

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