STM Contribution to Library of Congress Survey on the Copyright Register
January 30, 2017

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1. What are the knowledge, skills, and abilities you believe are the most important for the Register of Copyrights?

The International Association of Scientific Technical and Medical Publishers, STM, is the leading global trade association for academic and professional publishers. It has over 120 members in 21 countries, with many members based in or otherwise represented in the United States, who each year collectively publish nearly 66% of all journal articles and tens of thousands of monographs and reference works. As one of its aims and objectives, STM assists publishers and their authors in their activities in disseminating the results of research in the fields of science, technology and medicine.

STM's perspective is that the next Register of Copyrights must understand and have the ability to articulate the following to both Congress and the general public:

- the importance of copyright law to the US economy and cultural fabric, and the critical role of its implementation through the Copyright Office's services and responsibilities;
- the various roles copyright plays in the economics of publishing for authors, publishers and distributors of published works, including the diverse approaches taken by trade publishers, learning companies and scholarly societies;
- the challenges that publishers face in enforcing their rights online under the current framework; and
- the importance of bridging different points of view among all stakeholder communities to achieve copyright policies that lead to a well-functioning online copyright ecosystem.

Additionally, the next Register should have significant experience with:

- the federal legislative and regulatory processes; and
- working on copyright policy matters with the Executive Branch, including the Intellectual Property Enforcement Coordinator and the Patent & Trademark Office in the Department of Commerce.

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2. What should be the top three priorities for the Register of Copyrights?

Priority #1: Develop and implement policies for a sustainable online environment where authors, publishers and other rights holders can effectively exercise and enforce their rights under copyright.

Priority #2: Modernize the Copyright Office by promptly initiating implementation of the Copyright Office's IT modernization plan, which includes making the registration and recordation processes easier and more affordable.

Priority #3: Develop and implement more effective means for public education on copyright law, particularly on its economic and social impact on creators and users of copyrighted works.

3. Are there other factors that should be considered?

Although the Copyright Office is a department of the Library of Congress, rather than an independent agency, the search for its leader should be conducted with the utmost thought and consideration for the national and international importance of its highly-specialized mission and responsibilities, which include not only the diverse tasks involved in managing the operational performance of the Copyright Office, but also, by its numerous consultations and surveys on copyright issues (in which STM has often participated), play a key role in supporting policy development and implementation