



AUTHORS
ALLIANCE

ANNUAL REPORT

2015

About Authors Alliance

Our mission is to promote authorship for the public good by supporting authors who write to be read. We assist and represent authors who want to disseminate knowledge and products of the imagination broadly.

Although digital networks make it easier than ever before to reach audiences all over the world, many authors encounter barriers that frustrate their dissemination goals. Authors who are eager to share their existing works may discover that the works are out of print, un-digitized, and subject to copyrights signed away long before the digital age. Authors who are eager to share new works may feel torn between publication outlets that maximize public access and others that restrict access but provide important value in terms of peer review, prestige, or monetary reward. Authors may also struggle to understand how to navigate fair use and the rights clearance process in order to lawfully build on existing works.

Authors Alliance exists to ensure that these authors have the information, tools, and support they need to overcome these challenges and thereby disseminate knowledge and products of the imagination broadly.

We provide information and tools designed to help authors better understand and manage key legal, technological, and institutional aspects of authorship in the digital age.

We are a voice for authors in discussions about public and institutional policies that might promote or inhibit the broad dissemination they seek.

Since our launch in 2014, we've grown from a small group of founding members—including scholars, authors, policymakers, and public intellectuals—into an organization of over 700 members (and counting)! Our members share our commitment to having their work be read, seen, and heard, and help to shape our mission of education and advocacy. Members are the first to receive updates on new resources and updates of interest to our community, and they also receive our expert assistance on matters such as rights reversion and open access publishing.

To Our Members and Allies



2015 was Authors Alliance's first full year, and I am happy to report that we have been able to make a significant impact both for our membership and for authorship in the public interest generally. We released our first two educational guides, directed toward recovering long-lost publishing rights and open access publishing. We complemented these by providing advice and assistance to dozens of authors, and by continuing to grow the collection of educational resources freely available on our website. We traveled widely, hosting lively discussions about what it means to write to be read, and speaking on the issues limiting our members' ability to see their work disseminated on

their terms. On policy matters, we stood up to help make sure that fair use is fully available to authors of digital texts in the United States, spoke out against trade agreements that would calcify and expand overzealous copyright term extensions, and resisted a U.S. plan that would have placed the future of mass digitization in the hands of commercial licensing agencies.

Our team remains small, with just two primary staff, but the committed involvement of our members, allies, and our founders allows us to both set and realize lofty goals. With all of your continued support, I am confident that we can make 2016 a banner year for authors who write to be read. More work on rights reversion is on our agenda, but so is a new guide to publishing contracts and new tools for helping our members manage their rights. With many ongoing copyright policy developments around the world, we will be doing everything we can to make sure our members' voices are part of those debates.

I look forward to working with and for our community as we continue to grow.

Keep on writing to be read!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Michael Wolfe". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Michael Wolfe
Executive Director

Board of Directors



from left: Tom Leonard, Carla Hesse, Pamela Samuelson, Molly Van Houweling

Carla Hesse

is a Professor of History and Dean of Social Sciences at the University of California, Berkeley. A fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2009, she is a specialist in modern European History and the history of communication.

Thomas Leonard

is the University Librarian Emeritus and Professor of Journalism Emeritus at the University of California, Berkeley. He has served as the President of the Association of Research Libraries and as an Associate Editor of American National Biography.

Pamela Samuelson

is a Professor of Law and Information at the University of California, Berkeley and a Co-Director of the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology.

Molly Shaffer Van Houweling

is a Professor of Law and a Co-Director of the Berkeley Center for Law & Technology at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law. She was a founding staff member, and formerly served on the Board of Directors of Creative Commons.

Nicole Cabrera · Jordyn Ostroff · Brianna Schofield
Samuelson Law, Technology, and Public Policy Clinic

UNDERSTANDING RIGHTS REVERSION

When, Why, & How to Regain Copyright
and Make Your Book More Available

Lexi Rubow · Rachael Shen · Brianna Schofield
Samuelson Law, Technology, and Public Policy Clinic

UNDERSTANDING OPEN ACCESS

When, Why, & How to Make
Your Work Openly Accessible

2015 Achievements

This past year was an ambitious one for Authors Alliance, as we continued to grow. We received grant funding, hired staff, created a series of educational tools and resources, advocated for authors' issues, and took our message on the road.

Rights Reversions

In the spring of 2015, we launched our series of educational guidebooks with the release of *Understanding Rights Reversion: When, Why, & How to Regain Copyright and Make Your Book More Available*. The book, which is available online and in print, is a step-by-step guide to working with publishers to regain rights to older books so that they can be made available in the ways that authors want—from online editions to translations and more. The process of recovering rights—known as rights reversion—and using them to reach a wider audience isn't always straightforward. To answer that need, we provided a wealth of information about taking control of intellectual property, as well as tools and resources.

It's all part of our effort to help authors understand and manage the rights necessary to make their works broadly available, now and in the future.

Today, there are more options for distribution available than ever before, but many publishing contracts were written in a pre-digital world, with terms that lasted beyond an author's lifetime. Now that these contracts have been outpaced by new technologies, there has never been a more compelling time for authors to re-evaluate their publishing options. Fortunately, many of our members are working successfully with their publishers to sort out the rights issues standing between their work and the broad audiences digital distribution enables.

Thanks to a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, we expanded the scope and reach of our rights reversion project, taking our message to audiences around North America. We convened workshops and panel discussions in Toronto, Berkeley, Ann Arbor, New York City, and Durham, providing our community with expert hands-on assistance with rights reversion, open access, maximizing impact, and publication strategies.

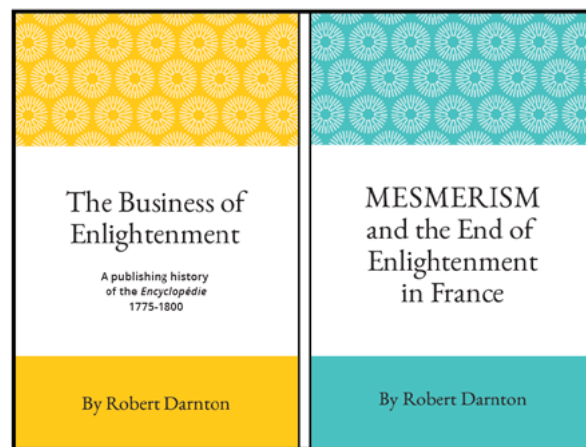
This year, for the first time, we were also pleased to offer personal assistance with rights reversion questions for authors needing one-on-one advice about their intellectual property rights. In collaboration with the Samuelson Law, Technology, and Public Policy Clinic at the University of California, Berkeley, School of Law and the support of the Mellon Foundation, we have the resources to help guide individuals through various aspects of the rights reversion process.

Success Stories

To demonstrate the benefits of rights reversion, we were proud to highlight a series of “Rights Reversion Success Stories” in 2015.

In September, we announced that two books by Robert Darnton, *The Business of Enlightenment* and *Mesmerism and the End of Enlightenment in France*, are now freely available in their entirety online. With our assistance, Darnton, an Authors Alliance Advisory Board member and an emeritus Professor of History and outgoing University Librarian at Harvard, secured the necessary rights to release two of his books under Creative Commons licenses. Thanks to Darnton’s efforts and the assistance of Harvard University

Press and HathiTrust, anyone with an internet connection can now find full-text copies of Professor Darnton’s books in the HathiTrust corpus and at the Internet Archive. The release of the books generated buzz on social media, with readers as far away as Japan expressing their enthusiasm about discovering the texts online.



Darnton’s success story initiated a series of titles made newly accessible thanks to authors’ efforts to recover rights to their work. We also featured titles from Jeff Hecht, John Kingdon, Stephen Sugarman, and Eric von Hippel.

These authors’ experiences demonstrate how recovering rights can work to the benefit of authors, publishers, and the public good. We look forward to many more success stories in the year to come!

Open Access

November saw the launch of our guide to *Understanding Open Access: When, Why, & How To Make Your Work Openly Accessible*. The guide is the second volume in our series of educational handbooks, following on the success of *Understanding Rights Reversion*, which landed in browsers and on bookshelves earlier in the year. Our goal is to encourage our members to consider open access publishing by addressing common questions and concerns and by providing real-life strategies and tools that authors can use to work with publishers, institutions, and funders to make their works more widely accessible to all.

Open access publishing is gaining momentum as a robust alternative to traditional publication models. Major funders, from the federal government to universities, are now requiring open access as a condition of grant awards. We’re proud of this latest effort to provide timely, useful tools for authors, researchers, and anyone who wishes to share knowledge for the public good.

The Authors Alliance Team



from left: Nicole Cabrera, Erika Wilson, Jordyn Ostroff, Brianna Schofield, Mike Wolfe, Raoul Grifoni-Waterman

In 2015 we welcomed Erika Wilson to the Authors Alliance as our new Communications and Operations Manager, joining executive director Michael Wolfe to form Authors Alliance's core staff. Erika comes to us from the California Digital Library, and brings a wide variety of expertise on nonprofit operations and authors' rights. We are fortunate to have her helping shape the future of Authors Alliance in the coming year!

While our core staff is small, we are fortunate to be able to work with a wide variety of members, allies, and researchers to help move our initiatives forward. At our Berkeley office, we had the privilege of working with a talented group of research assistants on all of our projects. Raoul Grifoni-Waterman, Yesol Han, Remi Salter, and Kelly Vargas contributed to our work on copyright policy, publication contracts, and

rights reversions, providing the invaluable support needed to maintain momentum across all of our initiatives.

Our guides to rights reversion and open access would not have been possible without the expertise of the Samuelson Law, Technology, and Public Policy Clinic at UC Berkeley Law. Led by Teaching Fellow Brianna Schofield, clinic students Nicole Cabrera, Jordyn Ostroff, Lexi Rubow, and Rachael Shen researched and wrote the guides, putting in countless hours of research and conducting in-depth interviews with authors, scholars, publishers, and intellectual property experts.

Our work supporting fair use rights in multimedia ebooks in front of the U.S. Copyright Office was made possible by painstaking effort from several teams of talented law students at

both the University of California, Irvine Intellectual Property, Arts, and Technology Clinic and the University of Colorado, Boulder Samuelson–Glushko Technology Law & Policy Clinic, under the supervision of Professors Jack Lerner and Blake Reid.

Our Advisory Board and our Founding Members have also been instrumental to all of our successes by participating in our rights reversion project, reviewing and critiquing our guides, arranging and speaking at many of our events, and providing ideas and feedback on our various projects.

To all the members of our extended team, and to the many members and allies who contributed their time and expertise in myriad more ways than we are able to list here, Authors Alliance extends a heartfelt thank you—your support makes a tremendous difference!

Issues & Advocacy

Authors Alliance continues to advocate for national and institutional policies that serve authors and the public by lending our voice to current debates. We provided detailed comments to the U.S. Copyright Office urging it to

reconsider a proposed Extended Collective Licensing program. We joined with other organizations such as the Electronic Frontier Foundation and Creative Commons to urge the U.S. Trade Representative not to extend copyright terms or turn its back on efforts to address the orphan works problem. With the University of California, Irvine Intellectual Property, Arts, and Technology Clinic and the University of Colorado, Boulder Samuelson–Glushko Technology Law & Policy Clinic, we testified before the U.S. Copyright Office at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., and won an exemption to the Digital Millennium Copyright Act, a federal law



Authors Alliance's Mike Wolfe (far right) with film scholar Bobette Buster and representatives from the UC Irvine School of Law and the University of Colorado School of Law

that would otherwise make many fair uses of multimedia content in ebooks unlawful.

Our team of legal and policy experts work at the leading edge of intellectual property and copyright law to speak for those who share our mission, and we will continue to do so in the new year in accordance with our Principles and Proposals for Copyright Reform.

Financial Summary

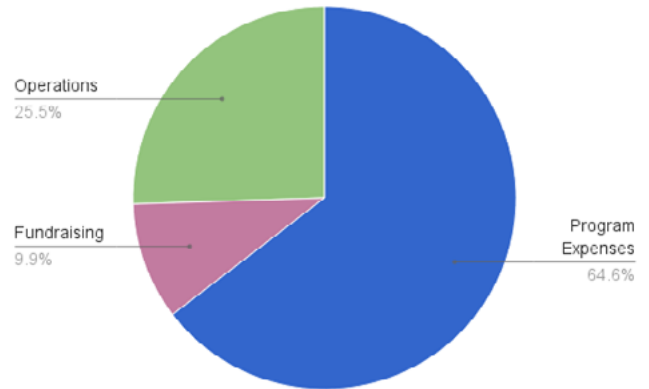
Authors Alliance runs on a combination of member support, foundation grants, and a handful of exceptional gifts from allies. In 2015, we were able to grow our operations significantly with the assistance of a two-year commitment of general support from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in support of our continuing effort to assist authors with rights reversions.

Meanwhile, our members continue to provide the generous support we need to build a sustainable future for the organization. We would like to express our appreciation to all those who made a gift to Authors Alliance in 2015. Thanks to you, we exceeded our year-end fundraising goal, ensuring a strong financial future for Authors Alliance.

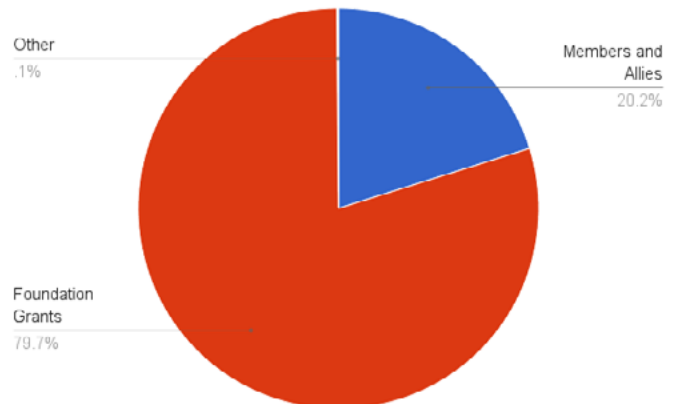
Looking Ahead to 2016

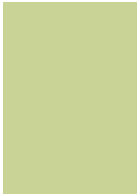

We have big plans for the year ahead! We want to continue to provide our members with advice on how to disseminate their work on their terms. We hope to streamline the messy “termination of transfers” process under U.S. copyright law, build a system to help authors keep track of their contracts, and release a new guide to help our members with their publishing contracts. Join us as a member to receive our latest updates as we work to make 2016 our best year yet!

Authors Alliance 2015 Expenses (\$110,679.15)



Authors Alliance 2015 Revenue (\$225,744.36)





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