



Attitude adjusters

Decades of bad behaviour have taken their toll on intellectual property, but the Center for IP Understanding, led by Bruce Berman, is attempting to change that

What are the aims of the Center for IP Understanding and how do you hope to achieve these goals?

The Center for Intellectual Property Understanding's (CIPU) mission is to increase key audiences' awareness of the purpose of IP rights and improve attitudes towards them. For an increasing number of people and businesses, music, books, novel designs, inventions and counterfeit goods appear to be there for the taking—or feel as if they should be. Acceptable IP behaviour can be taught to consumers, as well as business owners and executives. IP is abstract, and education needs to be both compelling and reinforced by lawmakers, schools and others.

CIPU is less about reminding people that IP infringement is a crime and more about why respecting IP rights is important, not just for your future, but for your children's.

What was the catalyst for CIPU?

The disconnect between what IP rights are intended to achieve and how is growing. While there are several good IP education initiatives, none have attempted to drill down and understand the IP awareness and attitude problem, it's possible sources and impact.

Pilfering ideas affects all forms of IP including patents, brands protected by trademarks, copyrighted content and trade secrets. It has become culturally acceptable to routinely violate other people's

rights—whether it be sharing music, buying fake goods or quietly refusing to pay someone for their invention until they file suit.

Are you looking for any sort of funding or partnerships? What kind of resources are currently available to you?

CIPU is a non-profit organisation and has received seed gifts from Microsoft and Philips. It still needs to generate funding. We are in the process of establishing partnerships with The Tusher Center for Intellectual Capital at University of California, Berkeley and Duke University's Center for Innovation Policy. We are also talking to organisations already working in the IP field to share information and resources, and possibly collaborate on projects. Links on our website include access to a free textbook for the study of IP (www.understandingip.org).

What are the gaps in the public's understanding of IP? How do you intend to fill them?

We have entered the 'free-information' era, where online content and patented inventions are readily pocketed by those who would never dream of shoplifting. Understanding what IP rights achieve and for whom is no longer easy to define. Decades of accepting bad IP behaviour have taken their toll on perceptions. We live in a culture that encourages access to all things for everyone all the time. IP free riding comes in many shapes and sizes. The data on jobs and revenue lost to fake goods, stolen content and patent infringement is overwhelming. [IPPro](#)

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Bruce Berman, Chair, Center for IP Understanding