

IPO launches new strategy to address IP crime and infringement

The Intellectual Property Office (IPO) has today published the UK's new [Intellectual Property \(IP\) Counter-Infringement Strategy](#).

The new 5 year strategy represents a step change in the IPO's drive to protect IP rights. By partnering with others to set a global gold standard, it aims to make UK IP rights – and rights owned by UK businesses internationally – the best protected in the world.

The strategy seeks to establish how enforcement agencies, government and industry can work together to build upon and improve current structures, ensuring that IP infringement is tackled coherently as a strategic economic and social threat – at home and internationally. It will be underpinned by a strong research plan, and the findings will be shared widely with partner organisations to build a robust evidence base to support and inform work.

5 Key commitments within the strategy include:

- to establish a national centre of excellence for the development and analysis of intelligence relating to IP infringement, placing this at the core of IP enforcement activity and ensuring it takes a central lead and coordination role in the fight against IP crime and infringement
- to work with Trading Standards, Border Force and the Police to embed IPO funded IP crime coordinators and champions in local regions to develop intelligence, coordinate activity and resource the fight against IP crime and infringement
- to work collaboratively with enforcement agencies to review how IP crime is recorded
- to develop the structures and membership of the IP Crime Group – enabling it to have a strategic and tactical enforcement focus across government, enforcement agencies and industry
- to develop impactful campaigns to reduce IP crime and infringement, working with partners and focusing on both those knowingly and unknowingly infringing

IP crime is often considered by criminals as a low-risk but very high-reward crime. The IPO's new strategy highlights the link between IP crime and other serious criminality such as money laundering, causing significant harm across communities. The strategy recognises that increased public awareness and criminal enforcement are complementary elements in addressing these harms. It commits to working toward a time when IP infringement is seen as socially unacceptable to all, while delivering intelligence driven enforcement action against the perpetrators of IP crime.

The delivery plan will be intelligence-led, harm-focused, and continuously improved. Work within the strategy will be organised under three overarching themes:

- **partnership:** to co-ordinate the UK's fight against IP crime and infringement
- **leadership:** to continue to be a world leader on IP enforcement
- **education:** to empower consumers and businesses and raise awareness and understanding of IP crime and infringement and risks surrounding it

The IPO's Chief Executive, Tim Moss, said:

IP drives innovation and investment, and is at the heart of the government's Innovation Strategy. The infringement of IP rights poses a significant threat to this. It undermines the confidence IP rights give to businesses and investors, damages the economy, and has grave consequences for consumer safety and communities.

Our new strategy lays the groundwork for us to tackle IP crime and infringement in all areas, now and in the future. Our commitments within the new strategy are exciting and ambitious, and we believe they will have a real impact in the fight against IP crime at regional, national and international levels.

Alliance for IP Director General Dan Guthrie said:

We welcome the IPO's new Counter-Infringement Strategy, and the benefits to businesses, small and large, that greater collaboration will bring in this hugely important area.

IP rights play a fundamental role in protecting the hard work and investment of creators and inventors in every region of the UK, whilst also protecting the public. We know that our members will be keen to continue to work closely with the IPO to deliver the ambitious commitments in the strategy over the next five years, working together in the fight against IP crime and infringement, to ensure they can continue to drive economic growth across the UK.

Detective Chief Inspector Suzanne Ferris, of the City of London Police's Intellectual Property Crime Unit (PIPCU), said:

Intellectual property crime is not a victimless crime and often helps to fund serious and organised criminal activity. We welcome this new strategy which will help co-ordinate the fight against this type of crime and we will continue to work closely with the Intellectual Property Office, and our partners, nationally and internationally, to tackle this and bring those responsible to justice.

City of London Police Assistant Commissioner Pete O'Doherty, National Co-Ordinator Economic and Cyber Crime; Co-Chair IP Crime Group said:

The launch of the new IP Counter-Infringement strategy by the UK Intellectual Property Office sets out an ambitious and comprehensive framework to tackling the infringement of IP Rights. Counterfeit goods are often sold locally, having been facilitated and routed across global supply chains by organised and international criminal networks.

This strategy sets a clear vision with the investment needed, that puts in place the foundations for a strong partnership approach with all areas of law enforcement in the years to come.

Notes to editor:

- 1) The [OECD](#) found that the total volume of lost sales by UK IP rights owners amounted to £8.6 billion, or 1.95% of their total sales in 2013. The 2019 OECD update report also found that in 2016 at least 86,300 jobs were lost due to counterfeiting and piracy (60,000 in 2013). That represents 1.4% of full-time equivalent employees in the UK (1.15% in 2013):
- 2) According to the [United Nations Commission on Crime Prevention and Criminal Justice](#), counterfeiting is now the second largest source of criminal income worldwide, second only to drugs.
- 3) The [OECD](#) estimates the trade in counterfeit and pirated products amounted to as much as \$461 billion in 2019, which equals 2.5% of world trade.
- 4) IP criminals have been able to use the internet to reach out to consumers using legitimate platforms to advertise illicit counterfeit goods. This has resulted in almost one third of people in the UK having fallen [victim to counterfeit scams when shopping online](#).
- 5) The IPO has regularly commissioned research into topics relating to the infringement of intellectual property rights. In addition to the [Social Media Influencers](#) research published last year, regular reports include the [Online Copyright Infringement tracker](#) and the [Physical Goods Tracker reports](#).