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Changes And Challenges Of Turning 40 On The Road To Rio and Beyond



By *Kevin Nachtrab*,
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In this, the 40th year of the founding of LES International, it is fitting that we will be convening our Annual Convention in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil on 7-10 April 2013 under the theme “Changes and Challenges: Commercializing Innovation in a Changing World.”

The challenges posed in this age of austerity and increasingly-rapidly changing communications and business, means that the old axiom, “adapt or die,” has never been more relevant. To this end, 2013 sees LESI innovatively adapting itself and the way it does business to help carry LES forward into its next forty years and beyond: “Commercializing” its innovations, if you will. And, as the theme of our Annual Conference suggests, LESI believes that by actually “commercializing” these innovations we will be able to rise to the challenges that LESI and all other professional organizations are facing today in order to continue to bring the maximum value possible to LESI Members worldwide and the various LES Member Societies of which they are members in this Changing World.

For one, LESI is streamlining its organization and administration in a manner that will enable us to better address the needs of our members both now and for years to come. We are moving to a virtual office: More matters will be handled electronically. Year 2013 also sees the first full year of Chris Katopis as our new Executive Director. Chris will be overseeing the LESI administration as LESI transitions to a virtual office and into its new year.

We are adapting the means and developing vehicles for delivering educational and other content to members in ways that are more meaningful to them at lower costs. LESI is increasing its online content and moving to develop webinars and other electronic educational materials which can be accessed easily and economically by those members who, due to challenging economic times, find themselves unable to travel the often long distances required to attend Annual Meetings. To this end, the LESI Industrial Professional and Regional Committees are all experi-

menting with webinars of various formats, to examine which format is the most effective globally. *LES Global News* has already been moved into an entirely electronic format since last year, permitting members to access it on their “desktop” when and where they want. This approach will permit members to access those educational offerings of their choice without the necessity, and attendant costs, of travel.

Further, we are adapting our approach to indeed deliver more for less and make LESI an even better value proposition for its members worldwide. An example is that the long range Planning Committee has started an aggressive Knowledge Capture and Management Program. Other examples include the continuing efforts to tag and otherwise make *les Nouvelles* articles more accessible and searchable.

But, by no means, does this suggest that we will lose the skill or stop providing the opportunity to provide each member with quality professional education and “f2f” contact time and atmosphere, so essential for building those all-important professional and personal networks, which are the hallmark of LESI and the licensing profession.

Indeed, for that, one need look no further than the LESI website for a listing of the still copious LES Meetings and Events that are being held around the world by both LESI and its Member Societies, which feature and facilitate networking in the relaxed business atmosphere to facilitate business contacts and dealmaking.

And perhaps no meeting will exemplify this principle more than our upcoming Annual Conference in Rio. With keynote addresses by the Honorable Randall R. Rader, Chief Judge of the United States Court of Appeals for the Federal Circuit, and the Hon. Luiz Fux, Justice Minister of the Brazilian Supreme Federal Court, 32 workshops and special appearances by Microsoft IP leaders, the conference offers attendees an impressive line-up of individuals who are not just thought leaders but also implementers.

The conference will boast a social program unlike anything that could be offered outside of Rio. The Conference will be held at Rio’s newest 5 Star hotel, the

Windsor Atlantica in Copacabana. The opening reception will also take place at the Windsor Atlantic, where attendees will be serenaded by the soft rhythms of Brazilian Bossa Nova and Chorinho of Maestro Delfin Moreira and his band with a panoramic view of Copacabana beach at dusk. The conference dinner will be held on the Clube Caiçaras, an island inside the Rodrigo de Freitas Lagoon with unparalleled views of the city by night. And being Rio, ...well, you just know that we’ll have to samba some.

For those who cannot make it to Rio, 23-25 June will see the LES Pan European Conference in the idyllic, peaceful surroundings of the Swiss Alps, at the very same conference center in Davos, Switzerland, that houses the World Economic Forum’s annual “Power Summit.”

Based on the theme “The Spirit of Licensing,” the Pan European Conference will present a program that explores the “Blue” and “Green” economies. Keynote and opening speaker will be Gunter Pauli, reporter to the Club of Rome, with his book discussing the “Blue Economy” with the “Green Car” being the subject of a second keynote address. Key panels will feature members of the WEF Global Action Council on IP discussing the global challenges for the IP system and licensing, including the blue and green aspects of a sustainable economy and how IP portfolios should be managed (“Is the time ripe for managing IP rights in a profit & loss organisation“)?

These events and many more that will be held by the 32 LES Member Societies worldwide show that LES members remain committed to providing an environment that facilitates engagement with colleagues old and new and in getting business done.

So there you have it: LESI using innovation for addressing the changes and challenges it faces as it turns 40 on the road to Rio, ...to Davos and...beyond.

Let me close by inviting all members to come to the Annual Conference in Rio de Janeiro, to Davos and to other LES events to meet and get to better know your colleagues and peers, to start knowing LES better and to help us celebrate our first forty years as well as to toast the start of our next forty years of licensing, networking, education and mentoring. ■