

# Transmission syncs on copyright, pay issues

BY MIKE DEVIN, TIMES COLONIST FEBRUARY 11, 2011

The majority of music that is downloaded comes from an illegal source. This has been the case for the better part of the past decade.

When it comes to music and other creative arts, technology means everything is in flux.

As some of the top thinkers in several industries gathered in Victoria this week, the common theme was that nothing as it operates now, including business models, is expected to stay the same.

Distributors might make music available for free, or for pay through iTunes, or for subscription via streaming on your phone.

Those issues and many others related to the creative industries provided the backbone for Thursday's fifth annual Transmission conference, held at the Inn at Laurel Point.

Transmission, an invitation-only conference of 150 delegates from as far away as Finland, Portugal, Israel, China, Germany and Argentina, is largely a closed-door affair, but the discussions are universal in scope, and could have a profound impact in the near future -on how the world consumes art, how it is paid for and how it will evolve in the future.

The conference, which is produced by Victoria's Fan Tan Group, gathered decision-makers from across many creative industries to discuss new services, business models and modes of consumption.

The arguments often involved the issue of copyright.

"It was never a big topic until 15 years ago," said director Eric Baptiste of the Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada, during his keynote address.

"But now everybody has an opinion about copyright, and it is not a good one."

Despite the struggles involved with maintaining copyright control, Baptiste said there is potential for some major issues, such as peer-to-peer file sharing, to be resolved in a win-win fashion. Some artists are already victors, he said.

"Through modern copyright, they can be independent. We should not forget this. It is a great human achievement."

Rob Wells, the president of global digital business for the world's largest record label, Universal Music Group, also spoke about the uncertain present and his hope for a stable future. According to Wells, all is not lost at this point.

"As an industry, we need to be seen as progressive as possible, and embrace new models and

modes of consumption.

The industry as a whole needs to be seen doing what it can to provide consumers with legitimate alternatives. Then, if we still haven't managed to succeed, then it's definitely time to raise our hands and say, 'We need help.' "

David Neale, the senior vice-president of special products for BlackBerry maker Research In Motion, also spoke about the benefits of the multi-use devices such as the PlayBook, BlackBerry's long-awaited and still unreleased tablet, which he brought along in a droolworthy bit of show and tell.

Neale was all for the oncoming innovation. "You can change things incrementally. But sometimes innovation requires complete substitution."

Transmission continues today at the Inn at Laurel Point.

The transmitLIVE festival, held in conjunction with the conference, continues as well tonight with sets of music at Yates Street's Legacy Art Gallery, the Hotel Rialto and Sugar nightclub. For more information, visit [transmitnow.com](http://transmitnow.com). [mdevlin@timescolonist.com](mailto:mdevlin@timescolonist.com)

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