



Press release

30 October 2024

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Round table agrees on recommendations for e-book lending in public libraries – Minister of State Claudia Roth: “An important step towards fair conditions in e-book lending”

Today, the participants in the round table on e-book lending – representatives of authors, translators, publishers, booksellers and librarians – agreed on recommendations for lending e-books in public libraries. These recommendations are intended to improve access to digital media in libraries and contribute to fair compensation for copyright holders and publishers. With all stakeholders agreeing on these joint recommendations, the Federal Government can implement a promise made in its coalition agreement.

Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media Claudia Roth said: “I very much welcome this constructive process and the recommendations developed by the round table. Together, we have managed to set the wheels in motion where a debate had been stalled out for years. This is a successful result for a contentious issue. The recommendations are an important step towards fair conditions and improvements in e-book lending in public libraries. I now hope that these recommendations can be used to develop and test licensing models in pilot projects. I would like to thank the participants in the round table for their trust, their willingness to enter into to dialogue and their dedication.”

The round table discussed in detail the challenges and opportunities of e-book lending as well as possible solutions. Their discussions were based on a study on e-book lending which the Federal Government Commissioner for Culture and the Media had commissioned on the recommendation of the round table. A broad-based survey by the Federal Ministry of Justice on the issue was also taken into consideration.

One of the concerns was that, for many years, libraries have usually had to wait for e-book licenses, which are made available to them much later than the actual date of publication – a method known as windowing.

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As a solution to this problem, the round table suggested developing and testing licensing models based on negotiation, which could make publishers more willing to release e-books to libraries earlier. If e-books are made available to libraries at an earlier stage, the round table recommends accounting for this financially in licensing negotiations.

Minister of State Claudia Roth hosted the first round table on e-book lending in autumn 2022.

Members of the round table on e-book lending included the German Publishers and Booksellers Association, a representative of a publisher, the German Library Association, the Association of German Librarians, the Network for Authors' Rights, the Association of German Writers, the Association of German-speaking Translators of Literary and Scientific Works, the Federal Ministry of Justice and the Federal Ministry for Economic Affairs and Climate Action.

The round table's recommendations are available at:

<https://www.kulturstaatsministerin.de/empfehlungen-e-lending>

More detailed information:

- Final report of the study on e-book lending conducted by DIW Econ GmbH:
https://www.diw.de/documents/publikationen/73/diw_01.c.912941.de/diwkompakt_2024-201.pdf
- Responses to the survey conducted by the Federal Ministry of Justice:
https://www.bmj.de/DE/themen/wirtschaft_finanzen/rechtsc_hutz_urheberrecht/urheberrecht/stellungnahmen/stellungnahmen_node.html