> Consumers want to be able to transfer their legally purchased content from one device to another.
> Rightsholders need to maintain some level of control over the use of their content.
> DRM manufacturers are using content to promote their proprietary systems.

✓ HOW DO YOU RECONCILE ALL THESE CONTRADICTIONARY STATEMENTS?
✓ HOW DO YOU PROVIDE INTEROPERABILITY BETWEEN DIGITAL DEVICES WHILE CONSIDERING ALL THE PARTIES INVOLVED?
✓ IS MP3 REALLY THE ONLY SOLUTION?

INSPIRED BY THE GENIUS AUGUST FERDINAND MÖBIUS WHO DISCOVERED A MULTIDIMENSIONAL OBJECT THAT HAS ONLY ONE SIDE, THE MOEBIUS INDUSTRY FORUM OFFERS A UNIQUE ANSWER TO A MULTIDIMENSIONAL PROBLEM.
What is Moebius?

Moebius is an international forum whose objective is to promote interoperability between Digital Rights Management (DRM) systems. It is open to all parties involved in the digital entertainment and cultural industries.

Why do we need interoperability?

History has taught us that competing formats performing a similar function are a hindrance to market acceptance. Whether VHS vs. Betamax or Blu-ray vs. HDVD, format wars only confuse consumers. In contrast, cross-industry standards such as the compact disc or DVB (mpeg-2) have been great market successes which in turn have benefited both consumers and the industry. Content can be played seamlessly on any device. They interoperate.

In the field of digital rights management, DRM systems are currently not interoperable. DRM systems lock consumers into a proprietary system forcing them into purchasing the content that is only compatible with their player. Yet, it would be naive to suppose that one single format should apply in the digital and immaterial world. To impose a single format would stop competition among major players in the digital industry. Interoperability can provide the same benefits to the public as a single format and can be provided within the current competitive market for the benefit of all.

But I can already use my iPod® to play mp3 songs!

Whilst it is certainly possible to play mp3 songs on an iPod®, this is not an example of effective interoperability. It involves a cumbersome process for the consumer and deprives rightsholders of the protection of DRM. The only way to make DRMs interoperable today is by removing the DRM and using the non-protected AAC or mp3 formats.

How does it work today?

When you buy a song from an online store, it comes protected by a proprietary DRM. If you want to listen to it on a non-compatible device, you would need to burn the song onto a CD-R and then rip it again as an mp3 file. Then you do have an interoperable system but in a non-protected format, a tedious process that also defeats the purpose of having a DRM in the first place.

What is the solution?

Moebius’ goal is to replace the ‘export to mp3’ function with an export to mpeg-21 function.
**What is mpeg-21?**

Mpeg-21 is an open multimedia framework. In short it is a secure, non-proprietary and interoperable DRM. It has been defined by a group of experts from many industries under the umbrella of the International Standards Organisation. Because it is an ISO standard, mpeg-21 can be used by anybody, unlike many other proprietary DRMs. Furthermore, mpeg-21 is available for licensing on reasonable and non-discriminatory terms.

**How will Moebius work?**

The Moebius architecture enables content purchased in proprietary formats to be exported into the mpeg-21 format. Users can then enjoy their content on other media players or on their home network, as they did before. All parties using DRM systems will also be able to continue using their proprietary formats, as they did before. The difference is that by adding an mpeg-21 export/import function, future copies of content can be tracked and better controlled. Unlike mp3 where all control is lost, mpeg-21 allows for the transfer of files but with the application of any limitations which the rightsholders may choose to require.

**Will existing DRM systems become obsolete?**

Not at all, on the contrary. The philosophy behind Moebius is that an interoperability solution should work within the existing market. Mpeg-21 is designed as a convenient and simple layer that will work alongside current or future DRM systems; it will not replace them. Mp3 itself will not disappear – mp3 is an audio compression system that does not have a security function. Mpeg-21 comes as a wrapper around the mp3 format, providing a vital yet efficient layer of security.

**Are consumers going to like it?**

The short answer is – yes. Mpeg-21 must be implemented in such a way that it is transparent to the consumer. Consumer acceptance is a critical part of the equation. Applying mpeg-21 does not mean that consumers cannot make copies. Mpeg-21 can be tuned to allow consumers to make a pre-determined number of copies or even an unlimited number of copies. If implemented properly, the transition from mp3 to mpeg-21 will be invisible to consumers. But the advantage is that mpeg-21 will remove one of the current critical hindrances that prevents the development of the online market and will allow new business models, beneficial to consumers, to be implemented in the future.
Does it really work?

The short answer is – yes. Mpeg-21 has been designed with interoperability in mind, and it is therefore well suited to this type of application. Preliminary studies show that it is technically possible. Of course further work must be done to refine its application. It is simply a matter of determination.

What is the role of Moebius?

Moebius is a not-for-profit organisation whose primary mission is to promote the implementation of interoperability of DRMs through mpeg-21 within the digital entertainment industry.

Its first priority will be to define the technical specifications allowing the export/import functions between all existing DRMs and mpeg-21.

The second priority will be to make this specification available to all parties using proprietary DRM systems and to support them in the implementation process.

Why should I join?

Smooth and transparent interoperability between all DRM systems is bound to enhance consumer acceptance and therefore generate market growth. Everyone involved in the digital entertainment industry, from the original creator through to producers, publishers, retailers and consumers will benefit. Moebius offers a consensual solution that will not destabilise the existing industry. By joining, you will be involved in driving the process forward and you will be able to ensure that Moebius addresses your specific industry’s concerns.

OK – I’m convinced. How do I join?

Moebius is in the course of being formally established as a not-for-profit organisation. In the meantime CISAC is acting as the central secretariat for Moebius. Members of Moebius will be drawn from all sectors of the digital entertainment and cultural industries. A membership fee will be charged to support the technical, legal and promotional efforts needed to deliver DRM interoperability. Moebius welcomes expertise in the technical, legal and business intelligence fields.

IF YOU ARE INTERESTED IN PARTICIPATING, PLEASE CONTACT:

FX NUTTALL
@: FX.NUTTALL@CISAC.ORG
TEL: +33 (0)1.55.62.08.56

CISAC (International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers)
BIEM (International organisation representing mechanical rights societies)