

# **The Future of Blockchain Technology and Collective Management Organisations: Copyright Enforcement Solved?**

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Since 2008, and particularly in more recent years, much has been written and said about blockchain technology. On the one hand there have been suggestions of it being more than a revolution whilst on the other, it has been regarded as a mere “hype”. Yet, a closer insight reveals that the truth may be found somewhere in between. Particularly, managing Intellectual Property Rights (IPRs) has frequently been viewed as a relevant ‘use case’ for the supposedly ground breaking technology.

This paper, will explore how the current and future use cases of the blockchain technology will fit into the legal framework designed for traditional collecting societies. In doing so, the paper will examine the fairness of a potentially new system, which bears the characteristics of stripping aside the “middleman” and permitting direct transactions between parties. Such elements have much significance for copyright law, particularly from the point of view of enforcement in the dissemination of creative works.

Accordingly, this paper will focus on the benefits and challenges faced by copyright management organisations (CMOs) and will draw on the recently implemented Directive 2014/26/EU on *Collective Management of Copyright and Related Rights and Multi-Territorial Licensing of Rights in Musical Works for Online Use in the Internal Market* (CRM Directive). The Directive attempted to address the long-standing challenges of transparency, financial management, governance and multi-territorial licensing of works amongst others – hence, aiming for a more open and modern system. Drawing on these recent developments, the paper will question whether the blockchain technology fits within the framework of CMOs thereby providing for a fairer and stronger enforcement landscape. In conclusion, the paper will propose some recommendations, reforms and thoughts for the future.