

## **The Knowledge Conservancy**

The Knowledge Conservancy is a non-profit organization which makes privately held intellectual property accessible online to the public for free and assures its long-term preservation. The Knowledge Conservancy accepts licenses to and donations of copyright properties in addition to financial support to achieve its mission.

The Knowledge Conservancy provides public benefits by making donated or licensed content available on a “free-to-read” basis to anyone with access to the Internet, by acting as a repository for this content to assure its long term preservation and accessibility, and by engaging in and/or supporting research and development efforts aimed at preserving works of human knowledge and expression through changes in information storage and access technologies.

The Knowledge Conservancy offers society a way of avoiding costs involved in converting lost electronic information into electronic form after it has spent years under copyright protection but not available for use. By giving rights to the Knowledge Conservancy, owners of intellectual property ensure that their property will continue to be available and will not need to be rescued by heroic means decades after ‘going out of print’.

The Knowledge Conservancy offers members of the public who believe in the value of free public access to intellectual property a way of ‘leveling the playing field’ for rich and poor individuals and rich and poor countries. By enrolling as a dues paying member of The Knowledge Conservancy or by making significant financial contributions to promote greater accessibility, public supporters can also assure that future generations will have access to intellectual properties after the current owners of such properties are no longer interested in providing access.

The Knowledge Conservancy offers authors, publishers and other copyright owners a means to serve the public good while still exploiting the commercial value of their assets. Owners of intellectual property can select terms for their donations, specifying the timing of public release and degrees of functionality associated with online access, so as not to compete with their own products offerings. Indeed, deeding to The Knowledge Conservancy may accentuate the value of commercial offerings and/or allow potential consumers to review the content before buying a product.

The Knowledge Conservancy is directed by professionals who have been involved in developing libraries of freely accessible content on the Internet, crafting organizations that make radical new uses of intellectual property online, and developing and implementing models for long-term preservation of digital content. Its advisors include people who have played a major role in Internet commerce, re-engineering intellectual property law, and Digital Library development.

The Knowledge Conservancy concept has proven highly attractive to potential contributors, who indicate willingness to join the Conservancy as members at annual rates of \$40-\$100, and to major supporters who have expressed willingness to provide on-going and one time support at all levels. A schedule of membership and sponsorship contribution levels has been designed to meet operating expenses and build an endowment devoted to long-term preservation. The Knowledge Conservancy concept has also proven attractive to copyright owners who have indicated their willingness to donate access rights, individually and corporately, both in order to help realize the broad social benefits of free public access to online content and its preservation over time, and to realize benefits to themselves through promotion of their intellectual property holdings and potential tax benefits for progressive levels of public access donations.

The Knowledge Conservancy is currently seeking both major contributors and content donors. Start up costs prior to a full launch are expected to be \$1,000,000 and The Knowledge Conservancy will seek to obtain pledges of 10,000 works before launching the initial “Library” of publicly accessible online content.

## **Mission**

*The Knowledge Conservancy acquires rights to provide perpetual public access to intellectual property and makes access at a basic level free. It provides worldwide, online, public access to all the resources it administers at no charge to the viewers. Donations of money to The Knowledge Conservancy help ensure the future availability of recorded sources of human knowledge by paying the costs of maintaining electronic representations over time and managing the Conservancy and research essential to preservation of digital knowledge.*

*The Knowledge Conservancy is built on a foundation of respect for the value of intellectual property, whether privately owned or in the public domain. Copyright owners who deed public access rights to The Knowledge Conservancy ensure that it will always be possible to view content they own on-line, yet maintain their exclusive right to exploit the economic value of their intellectual property in value-added ways during the period of copyright protection and may obtain business write-offs and other tax benefits from their gift.*

*The Knowledge Conservancy creates a continuing social benefit by constructing and supporting the social and economic mechanisms to encourage 'free-to-read' information worldwide. When The Knowledge Conservancy obtains the right to provide access to privately owned intellectual property for the public, it makes the information available on-line. The frameworks which encourage copyright owners to make content freely available will be different in different times, countries, and technology environments, but The Knowledge Conservancy will seek to maximize the result through invention and deployment of appropriate methods.*

*The Knowledge Conservancy preserves the information content of knowledge deeded to its care in perpetuity and preserves its accessibility. While The Knowledge Conservancy is not an archive of original works, it is committed to ensuring online access to its holdings in perpetuity.*

## **The Knowledge Conservancy faces six fundamental challenges**

1. Obtaining content donations, by persuading copyright holders of the benefits of giving free-to-view public access
2. Obtaining financial contributions, by persuading the public of the value of an organization that is obtaining free-to-view public access on its behalf
3. Digitizing intellectual properties in a way that enables their delivery with progressive levels of functionality and reduces problems of longterm preservation
4. Creating metadata to support both retrieval and preservation
5. Providing access to potential readers worldwide
6. Migrating content and metadata over time

We will be happy to discuss our current strategies and explore your ideas.

## **Advisors are being sought for the following Committees**

Legal  
Technical  
Publishing  
Digital Library  
Membership & Development

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