

BUSINESS INNOVATION SYMPOSIUM (E6)  
Space-related Commercial Applications and Markets (2)

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AT WHAT PRICE? – IP-RELATED THOUGHTS ON NEW BUSINESS MODELS FOR SPACE  
INFORMATION

**Abstract**

Space imagery generators are set to become tomorrow's key players in the information society. Satellite-based information markets are waking up to new forms of revenue-producing products and services. Internet and satellite data-based services and teledensity will continue to increase radically in the future. With the capacity to deliver real-time precision downstream data, new demands for high resolution digital information, ranging from cartography to crop monitoring and other services for the green economy, are among the new products set to appear on the market. At a time when the traditional roles of space agencies, satellite owners, operators and organisations are becoming increasingly hybrid – due in part to the acquisition or sale of observation satellites – new value-added markets are attracting attention. Space data markets can range from raw data itself through to processed imagery and customised services. Finding a suitable business model remains, however, a challenge. In the case of space imagery, it might even be time to consider re-formulating some of the traditional approaches contained in space data policies. Generally, agencies and operators retain data copyright over the data in return for their economic investment in the satellite operation. Now, new players in the data business have clearer interests in recouping their investments, particularly when selling onwards to providers of value-added data services. Here, the profit model involves more than asserting economic copyright, particularly where not all types of data necessarily fulfil the criteria for copyright protection.

This paper discusses whether traditional data policies on data access and IP licensing schemes stand to remain a feasible prototype for distributing space data within a growth value added market. At the same time, the paper argues that a reappraisal of what data copyright in fact entails might help the community of generators to look for business models that are less focussed on copyright revenue than say, advertising revenues and product lines geared to different services and user groups, as does Google. The availability of free space data imagery and information from operations governed by freedom of information policies alongside litigation about the availability of so-called essential information could lead certain important user groups to drift towards lower or zero cost providers. The business model must therefore take a variety of imperatives into account for its success. This paper discusses how the legal regulation of data can influence the development of downstream business.