

Intellectual Property Empowers Inclusivity

When creators connect people through stories, a diverse world becomes more inclusive.

One popular video of two toddlers running towards each other for a hug continues melting the hearts of millions. This simple clip demonstrates the power and abundance of diversity and inclusivity in the world. Regardless of race or culture, people connect through stories and shared experiences, and those creators who bring real world perspectives into their art are the key to this connection.

One of these creators is Mann Robinson, founder of Mann Robinson Studios. As a self-employed, multi-talented filmmaker, he handles everything from writing to directing and editing to distribution. Mann's goal is to make movies that everyone can watch because, "Inclusion without diversity is confusion." Communities of the world are filled with diversity, so it is important for filmmakers like Mann to reflect all aspects of this reality in order to connect with a wide variety of people.

This intersection of diversity and inclusivity in creative works is also key for intellectual property (IP). There is little to no education surrounding the vital role of IP in creative and innovative efforts, and this disparity is even greater within marginalized communities. As Mann clarified,

"Not only do the unrepresented not own enough IP, they don't even know to own the IP, and that's a problem."

Why is this a problem? As Mann said, "There's no business without [IP]. That is the business." IP is a critical foundation of every element of the creative process. Studios own and license copyright in their works, maintain trademarks in their branding, and leverage their IP for sponsorships, partnerships, network development and other operational efforts. They also must respect the rights of other creators when licensing for distribution, biopics, or inclusion within another work. Within a singular film, copyright could exist for the written script, musical score, licensed music, directorial elements, and even actor ad-libs. Trademarks also often exist for original characters, merchandising, and both intentional and unintentional product use.

Creators need to learn the importance of each of these elements—and more—to protect their original works and grow their businesses. As Mann points out, simply owning a camera does not incentivize investors to help creators establish a studio. IP does.



Mann Robinson

Founder, Mann Robinson Studios

When asked what the environment would be like for his business if there were no IP rights, Mann clearly stated, "It would suck." He elaborated by telling a story about an actor who wanted to do what he was doing because Mann owns his own IP and doesn't have to take 30 gigs a year just to pay his bills. As Mann reiterated, "Without the IP, you are an employee."

IP is vital for advancing diversity and inclusivity in creation and innovation. Creators like Mann prove there are opportunities for success when a diverse group is included in the creative process and educated on the role and importance of IP.

Connection is key to the human experience. Creators connect across race, religion, culture, borders, barriers, and more to bring people together in a shared story of humanity. This is possible because IP enables.



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