Public comment draft of A2K amendments for UN Guidelines

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- UN Guidelines [1]

A new international instrument on Access to Knowledge (A2K [2]) could be in the wings, with the first public release of a draft set of proposed amendments to the United Nations Guidelines for Consumer Protection. These forward-looking A2K provisions are the culmination of months of online and face-to-face collaboration by Consumers International members from around the world.

The draft A2K amendments are now officially open for broader public comment at http://A2Knetwork.org/guidelines.

The UN Guidelines for Consumer Protection, which recently celebrated their 25th year, are a "soft law" statement of principles for consumer protection policy. From this document, the global consumer movement has drawn its eight consumer rights, which include the right to safety, the right to be informed, the right to choose and the right to be heard.

In proposing A2K as the next area to be added to the Guidelines by the UN, we have drafted amendments to:

- Stop suppliers from using technology to cripple digital products or unreasonably limit the ways in which consumers can use them.
- Promote a permissive approach to copyright to facilitate non-commercial creativity by consumers.
- Require that the dissemination of consumer safety information, and consumer-facing codes and standards, is free of copyright constraints.
- Prohibit IP [4] rights from being enforced in ways that trample on consumers' human rights.
- Ensure that consumers retain access to their own data in formats that they can use, and that such data is projected against misuse.

Your input on the draft amendments is invited between now and 31 August 2011. The online working space for the amendments allows you to browse the Guidelines section by section, and to attach your comments to individual paragraphs in a threaded fashion. All comments will be taken into account and responded to by the drafting committee.

We look forward to collaborating with you on this important initiative.

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