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On World Book and Copyright Day, UN official urges debate on publishing trends



A young boy reading a copy book in Qazvin, Iran

23 April 2011 – The head of the United Nations agency tasked with preserving the world's cultural heritage today [called](#) for debate on the changing trends in book publishing and copyrights, saying new technologies are transforming the industry and having an impact on publishers, authors and readers.

“Change is giving rise also to sharp new debates – about the strengths and weaknesses of different kinds of products, about the nature of copyright today, about the role of libraries relative to online knowledge, about the meaning of 'authorship' in a world of blogs and wikis,” said Irina Bokova, the Director-General of the UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization ([UNESCO](#)) in a [message](#) to mark the World Book and Copyright Day.

She highlighted UNESCO's responsibility to explore all the repercussions of the change, while preserving the values and forms of expression that the world shares and cherishes.

“Our role is to provide a platform for debate and to act as a knowledge-broker to explore old and new ideas,” Ms. Bokova said.

She said UNESCO will hold the second UNESCO World Forum on Culture and the Cultural Industries in June in Monza, Italy. The forum's theme will be “The Book Tomorrow the Future of the Written Word.”

Stressing that books are the best voices of tolerance and pillars of free and open societies, Ms. Bokova, called for their protection and for efforts to make them available to the 800 million adults who still do not have reading skills. “We must explore all aspects of the changes they [books] are undergoing today,” she added.

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