

Authors' rights under the spotlight

The Academic and Non-fiction Authors' Association of South Africa (ANFASA) will celebrate its 10th anniversary by reflecting on the issues facing writers today. The ANFASA conference will be held in Boksburg from 13 to 15 March 2014.



The occasion, to be held at the Birchwood Conference Centre on Johannesburg's East Rand, will feature a number of local and international speakers of non-fiction and academic publishing. The three-day event will mark the organisation's first annual conference as well as its annual general meeting.

ANFASA was founded on 13 March 2004 as the first national association specifically for authors of non-fiction works, textbooks and academic books, dedicated to promoting their works, sharing information and offering advice.

According to ANFASA's director, Kundayi Masanzu: "We thought our 10-year milestone would be an opportune moment to pause and reflect on the meaning of authors' rights, and how these can be protected and promoted.

"Authors need to be acknowledged for the role they play in knowledge creation, as well as for the relevance of their contributions to the national discourse about readership and learning. They also need incentives to produce more works."

Celebrating 20 years of democracy

As such, he added, the ANFASA Conference will provide the ideal opportunity for members and delegates to celebrate the country's 20 years of democracy by examining the opportunities and challenges facing non-fiction and academic writing in post-apartheid South Africa. The three days of stimulating and probing discussions will culminate in a gala dinner, at which University of the Witwatersrand Vice-Chancellor Adam Habib will be the keynote speaker.

Among the hot topics up for discussion during the conference will be the rapid advances in digital publishing and the increasing move towards open and free access to published works. Technology is certainly changing the way authors engage with their readers, and can be used to help learners access educational materials in the digital age - but what about the author's right to fair remuneration?

The protection of authors' intellectual property will be examined in depth by a panel comprising Geidy Lung (World Intellectual Property Organisation, Geneva), Barbara Hayes (Authors' Licensing and Collecting Society, UK), and Naomi Haasbroek (Libraries and Information Association of South Africa).

Mbulelo Mzamane (former Director of the Centre for African Literary Studies at the University of KwaZulu-Natal) will chair a panel discussion on policies and practices relating to indigenous languages in education in the 20 years since democracy, focusing on how best to incorporate indigenous languages within the school curriculum.

Open-access systems will be debated by a panel chaired by the University of Pretoria's Beth le Roux, with panellists including Susan Veldsman (Academy of Science for South Africa), Keyan Tomaselli (University of KwaZulu-Natal) and Andrew Joseph (Unisa Press: Journals Division).

Professor Andries Oliphant will preside over a session looking at how the creative industries, including authors, can pull together as a cultural lobby and influence government policies. Unpicking this issue in depth will be the Arterial Network's André le Roux, as well as international panellists Lung and Hayes.

ANFASA is inviting authors of academic and non-fiction material - regardless of whether their works have appeared in print - to register to attend the three-day conference.

As Kundayi Masanzu points out: "Authors' work needs to be promoted and their skills need to be expanded. This conference will set the tone for engaging on these issues and, in the process, will assist in defining the meaning of authors' rights and the role authors can play within the creative industries."

For more, go to www.anfasa.org.za/conference.asp

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