



*Trent Reznor is the mastermind of the American band Nine Inch Nails. The industrial rocker is also a dynamic businessman who's left the Age of Copyright in his wake and severed all connections with record companies. Trent Reznor delivers directly to the consumer. His latest album, GHOST I-IV, came out in March 08—and whether fans opted for the \$5 bargain edition or the \$300 deluxe package, it was only available online. This retailing strategy that's as simple as it is innovative made him about a million dollars richer within a few days—and without a record label taking its cut off the top. But Trent Reznor wants more. His mission is to upgrade fans from mere consumers to creative co-authors able not only to listen to Nine Inch Nails songs published under a Creative Commons license but also to remix and visualize them however they want. An affront to all copyright proponent and the rest of the music industry ...*

## **A NEW CULTURAL ECONOMY When Intellectual Property Runs Up against Its Limits**

(Linz, April 24, 2008) In 2008, the Ars Electronica Festival is scrutinizing the value of intellectual property and thereby facing one of the core issues of our modern knowledge-based society: that of freedom of information vs. copyright protection, big profit-making opportunities vs. the vision of an open knowledge-based society that seeks to build its new economy on the basis of creativity and innovation. And beyond that, we want to hammer out practical, workable rules to govern this new reality.

The 2008 Ars Electronica Festival. September 4 to 9. In Linz.  
[www.aec.at/culturaleconomy](http://www.aec.at/culturaleconomy)

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**Press Conference**  
Thursday, 24.04.2008, 10:00  
Ars Electronica Center  
Graben 15 / Ecke Dametzstraße  
A-4020 Linz



## ***A New Cultural Economy ...***

Everyday on the Internet, we click our way through a literally unfathomable surfeit of information. Texts, images, songs, videos—all of it data that, sometime or other, were somebody's intellectual property and, strictly speaking, still are. Placed online, they can be accessed by anyone. Everybody does it, and without much mulling over data protection and copyright issues.

A phenomenon that's always been inherent in the technical fundamentals of the Internet is now emerging: a new cultural economy. An economy of sharing in which information can no longer be sealed in or locked out by legal decree, but instead circulates unimpeded. Trent Reznor is one of the first leading artists to step forward as pallbearer at the funeral of the Age of Copyright and Intellectual Property—at the head of a procession of a whole generation of young users.

It has thus become obvious that the traditional concept of property breaks down in the face of our modern broadband culture. And idealistic advocates of an open knowledge-based democracy aren't the only ones calling for this; a new economy built upon creativity and ideas absolutely demands more flexible solutions!

Meanwhile, the cause of free networks and free knowledge has also been taken up by visionary municipalities and politicians, since instituting public W-LAN projects and the large-scale digitization of the holdings of public archives and libraries are precisely what the public has come to expect of its government administrators today.

## ***... when intellectual property runs up against its limits***

Nevertheless, even in the wake of the music industry's billion-dollar debacle, the lobbies of the vested interests still reject any constructive input into configuring this new cultural economy. Quite the contrary: they're still putting up bitter resistance and uncompromisingly clinging to patent law regulations, some of which go back to 15<sup>th</sup>-century Venice. Even sacrificing human lives on the altar of legally sanctioned profit maximization as Western pharmaceutical firms prevent copying of their costly medications.

Regardless of the desperate lengths to which this Old Generation goes in its attempt to preserve protective mechanisms handed down from bygone days and to put in place legislation tightened *ad absurdum* to prevent filesharing and downloads, the reordering of the protection accorded to intellectual property has long since become the Gordian knot of our globally-networked, knowledge-based society.

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## ***The 2008 Ars Electronica Festival***

If Old Europe's future prosperity truly is to be built upon creativity and innovation, then the free flow of knowledge is indispensable. Innovative business ideas and new marketing channels cannot be left to choke amidst a regulatory jungle enacted by individual nation-states or left up to the management practices of monopolists. Under the banner of "A NEW CULTURAL ECONOMY – When Intellectual Property Runs Up against Its Limits," the 2008 Ars Electronica Festival aims to co-author the preamble of this new knowledge-based society. What's at stake: the interplay of freedom of information and copyright protection, of big profit-making opportunities and the vision of an open knowledge-based society. And the fact that we still lack practical, workable regulations governing this new reality, rules whose formulation ought not to be left up to lawyers and MBAs alone.

Ars Electronica is inviting artists, network nomads, theoreticians, technologists and legal scholars from all over the world to convene in Linz September 4-9, 2008. Their artistic and scientific findings will be presented at symposia, exhibitions, performances and interventions staged in settings that go beyond classical conference spaces and cultural venues to permeate the cityscape at large. And as a final test-run before Linz's European Capital of Culture year in 2009, this production will heavily emphasize the interaction of our local network of cultural facilities and educational institutions.

## ***The 2008 Ars Electronica Symposium***

The computer and the Internet have tremendously accelerated the production and dissemination of information while slashing their price in the bargain. Suddenly, content is accessible worldwide. This has not only modified the way we deal with information; it has produced a shift in our whole economic system. We are being forced to adapt traditional conceptions to a changed technological reality. Some of us are already doing so quite successfully; others are resisting—and failing. This year's symposium will connect up application-users, artists, entrepreneurs, scholars and politicians, and provide an opportunity for them to get jointly geared up for what's ahead.

The 2008 Ars Electronica Symposium is being curated by Joichi Ito (J). Activist, entrepreneur and venture capitalist, Joichi Ito is founder and CEO of NEOTENY, a venture capital firm that specializes in personal communications and basic technology. He has started up numerous Web enterprises including PSINet Japan, Digital Garage and Infoseek Japan. In 2001, the World Economic Forum named him to its list of 100 Global Leaders for Tomorrow. As CEO of Creative Commons and a member of the board of ICANN, WITNESS and TECHNORATI et al., Joichi Ito is actively involved in cutting-edge Web 2.0 developments. Detailed info about Joichi Ito and Creative Commons is available online at <http://joi.ito.com/>

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