NO-REPLY-MAIL TO ALL ENROLLED STUDENTS

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Important Changes in Digital Access to Texts used in teaching as of January 1, 2017

Dear students,

we would like to make you aware of an important change regarding digital access to texts used in teaching as of January 1, 2017.

The copyright law (§52a UrhG) permits university instructors to make texts, which are protected by copyright, available to students in a password-protected field for a limited period of time. Till now the states paid a fixed fee to VG-Wort so that the teaching staff was not burdened by the obligatory fee. The hitherto valid agreement between VG-Wort and the Conference of Education Ministers, expires on December 31, 2016 and will be replaced by a new general agreement which each individual university can enter into. According to this general agreement, the teaching staff may only make electronic book extracts and scientific periodicals available if their use is individually recorded and the costs are charged.

The University of Stuttgart – following the recommendation of the Rectors’ Conference of Baden-Württemberg (LRK) – has decided not to enter into the above-mentioned agreement because the process of individual billing does not appear to be practical and would require a disproportionately high degree of effort. The refusal to enter into the general agreement is not a satisfactory solution to the problem, but rather an expression of the urgent wish to return to a practicable regulation.

As long as a new regulation has not been established, all those affected must live with the limitations of this new legal situation.

In concrete terms, this means:

1. that the texts protected by copyright in the ILIAS courses of the ongoing winter semester (and all other systems and websites) will only be available until December 31. 2016; and

2. that as of January 1, 2017 we are not permitted to make any further texts protected by copyright available in ILIAS.

You will find more details on www.ub.uni-stuttgart.de/52a. If any changes in the situation should occur before January 1, 2017, we will inform you immediately.

The university management is aware that this decision has disadvantages, especially for the students, because, for example, they have to go back to using analogue teaching material. However, we hope the widespread national refusal to accept the new general agreement will enable us to return to a fixed fee via the states and will open the doors for user-friendly digitalization at the teaching level, both for authors and researchers.

Yours sincerely,
Univ.-Prof. Dr.-Ing. Dr. h. c. Wolfram Ressel