

Reston, Virginia

March 19, 2020

Stationers' Hall Charity – Vision 350 Appeal

I am proud to be an Honorary Liveryman and Freeman of the Stationers' Company, one of only twenty-one so honoured in the past hundred years.

The Internet I helped shape now finds itself addressing 21st century challenges. How do we know which material is worth keeping and will we have the access devices to view it? What will happen to material on websites no longer able to pay their hosting provider? Will it be lost forever? These and many other vital issues form the agenda for the many public debates at Stationers' Hall. As I write this message, the world is challenged by the novel Coronavirus and the Internet is becoming one avenue for "work from home" for many whose jobs can be undertaken that way. In an ironic way, this global health challenge may well cement the Internet into our daily lives more deeply than ever.

The Stationers' Company has been at the forefront of securing and protecting the printed word by establishing the concept of copyright and recording its ownership. Its first records of creative content started in the 16th Century and the lifespan of that legacy endures today in its archives. The current Hall opened in 1673 so needs urgent improvements to facilitate greater public access. The Hall will close for 15 months from January 2021 for the redevelopment work ready for the 350th anniversary in 2023 of its rebuilding after the Great Fire of London. The Company is making a substantial contribution to this from its own resources but it cannot carry the whole cost. The members are contributing what they can but more help is needed.

I am delighted to offer my personal support to The Stationers' Company and see its unique history and legacy serve future generations linking technology and archives across six centuries. I hope you will do the same by gifting what you can to the Stationers' Hall Charity.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Vinton G. Cerf". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Vinton G. Cerf

VP & Chief Internet Evangelist

Google