

COPYRIGHT 101

In a typical business day, it is likely that you will use copyright-protected materials that are owned by others. Whether you copy an article from a newspaper for use in a meeting, use third-party data found on the Web in a presentation or e-mail colleagues or customers excerpts from an industry report, it is important to be aware of what is protected by copyright and what you need to get permission to lawfully use.

In the United States, copyright law is derived from specific language in the Constitution and exists to foster creativity and spur the distribution of new and original works. The law grants publishers, writers and other types of creators, and copyright holders the exclusive right to reproduce, perform, distribute, translate or publicly display their original works. Simply stated, this means that you must get explicit permission from the copyright holder before you can lawfully re-use, reproduce or redistribute a copyright-protected work, inside or outside of your organization.

This section provides an overview of copyright law, information about important topics such as fair use and the public domain, and a quick reference chart that outlines what content is protected by copyright and what is not.