

COPYRIGHT & DIGITAL CONTENT: What is Protected?

Any non-digital content that is protected by copyright is also protected in a digital form. For example:

- Print books are protected by copyright law, as are electronic books.
- Analog musical recordings are protected by copyright law, as are digital musical recordings.
- A print letter is protected by copyright law, as is an e-mail letter (both generally owned by the author).

Examples of digital content re-use that may require copyright permission:

- E-mailing an article to a co-worker, vendor, customer or prospect.
- Posting third-party research on an electronic bulletin board, Internet or intranet site.
- Burning slides from an industry conference or seminar on to a CD for distribution.
- Placing a link on your Web site to a specific page in someone else's Web site.

You should also note that a Web site may be copyright-protected as a single work, and the many different works contained in that Web site may also be protected individually.

Both electronic and non-electronic databases, such as professional directories and collections of images, may be protected by copyright law if they meet the criteria in the U.S. Copyright Act. With the proliferation of new databases in electronic form, new legislation is being discussed in Congress to protect even those databases that do not meet the requirements in the U.S. Copyright Act.