

Case Study

Verizon cuts copyright infringement risk with CCC solutions

Communications and technology solutions leader Verizon wanted to better ensure that its 180,000 employees around the world could innovate and collaborate effectively without putting the company at risk of copyright infringement.

The company makes ethical standards a top priority and sought to deploy a copyright compliance strategy that made it easy for their workers to do the right thing when it came to using and sharing copyrighted material. Learn how Verizon uses compliance solutions from Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) to reduce that risk and give employees the freedom to collaborate responsibly.

The challenge

Verizon is committed to the highest ethical standards and takes all compliance issues, including copyright, seriously. But with almost 180,000 employees around the world using and sharing published information to do their jobs, the company's compliance group wanted to minimize any possibility of copyright infringement by staff. Despite a rigorous program already in place, complying with copyright on such a large scale presented several challenges.

Throughout the year, Verizon's legal team receives countless questions from employees about the use of copyrighted works. "There is a long list of wants," reports Patrick Flaherty, assistant general counsel for trademarks and copyrights at Verizon. He advises Verizon's business units worldwide on intellectual property-related issues, including copyright.

"For our employees, more is always better," said Flaherty. "Employees want to use and share copyrighted content, such as newspaper and magazine articles, books, blog postings and video content in all formats from as many titles as possible. And they want an easy verification process to know what rights have been granted to them when they go to use that content."

To raise copyright awareness, Flaherty regularly educates employees on the importance of copyright and the risks of infringement. Every employee is required to protect Verizon's intellectual property rights and to respect the rights of others. Copyright is specifically mentioned in corporate policy statements related to intellectual property.

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Company

Verizon

Location

New York, NY

Industry

Telecommunications

About

Inc. (NYSE:VZ) (NASDAQ:VZ), is a global leader in delivering broadband and other wireless and wireline communications services to consumer, business, government and wholesale customers. Verizon Wireless operates America's most reliable wireless network, with more than 108 million retail connections nationwide. Verizon also provides converged communications, information and entertainment services over America's most advanced fiber-optic network, and delivers integrated business solutions to customers worldwide. A Dow 30 company with more than \$127 billion in 2014 revenues, Verizon employs a diverse workforce of 177,300.





A copyright policy alone will not shield your company from the infringement liability of your employees,”

Patrick Flaherty

Assistant general counsel for trademarks and copyrights, Verizon



“We have ongoing educational communications to employees and mandatory training about all forms of intellectual property, including copyright,” says Flaherty. “We notify employees about compliance issues related to copyright, what their obligations are, what Verizon’s policies are, and what training and licenses we have in place.”

For Verizon, taking a comprehensive approach to copyright compliance requires more than just a copyright policy.

Flaherty’s role in this area is to advise Verizon’s compliance group about copyright infringement liability risk. “What we try to avoid is the reputational risk or the embarrassment associated with a copyright infringement lawsuit. No company wants to be associated with a public copyright infringement judgment and all of the bad press that comes with that,” he explains.

The solution

Verizon chose CCC solutions to simplify copyright compliance for its workers and give its legal team peace of mind. These solutions enable Verizon employees around the world to share articles and other content responsibly from the most sought-after journals, published news sources, books and blogs. There’s no guesswork with CCC. Usage rights are consistent across the millions of information sources covered. And, if employees work on joint projects with staff of other CCC-licensed organizations, the CCC solution can extend license coverage to allow sharing of published material among those team members from multiple companies. Along with rights licenses, Verizon also received a rights advisory tool from CCC. It allows employees to view their license rights anytime and see exactly how they can share articles and other materials.

Verizon recognized that team members’ content uses didn’t stop with written material. “We often received staff requests to use movies in presentations and training sessions,” said Flaherty. “Unfortunately, we told them ‘no’, because we didn’t have repertory licenses in place and we didn’t have the staff, time or money to negotiate licenses on a case-by-case basis.”

Adding movie and TV usage rights from CCC was an easy decision. “I like to be able to tell employees ‘yes’, and CCC’s Motion Picture License now allows me to do that,” Flaherty added.

In addition to license rights, Verizon also uses CCC’s copyright educational resources to help inform employees about important copyright issues in the workplace. Customers have access to on-site and online workshops, videos, and white papers and other materials to get staff up-to-speed on the basics of copyright in the U.S. and abroad.

Recently, Verizon’s compliance group created a 25-minute web-based course covering all of Verizon’s policies and procedures regarding copyrighted works. This mandatory training was designed to educate employees about copyright and violation risks. Flaherty points out the significance of this program. “The point of training is not just to issue a list of things employees cannot do. Rather, its purpose is to provide employees with as much information as possible to raise copyright awareness and let them know what they can do with published information.”

Compliance solutions from CCC support collaboration by making it easy for employees to share content responsibly from millions of information sources with colleagues throughout the organization. The result – greater opportunities for discovery and innovation, increased efficiency and a simple way to minimize infringement risk.

The results

Integrating CCC compliance solutions into Verizon’s extensive copyright program was a win-win for the company’s workforce and legal team. Employees collaborate with confidence, leveraging published information to develop new solutions and deliver greater service to customers. And Flaherty and his Legal department can breathe easier knowing they’ve taken significant steps to minimize infringement risk. The entire company benefits by cutting the time and expense involved in negotiating countless agreements with individual rightsholders.

In addition to simplified compliance, Flaherty mentioned one additional immediate benefit of CCC solutions: “No more boring meetings for Verizon employees.” Workers can legally show scenes and full-length movies and TV shows from more than 650 producers and theatrical distributors, including Hollywood studios. “Right now, the license is being used to enhance employee education and training, sales presentations and company meetings.”



About CCC

A pioneer in voluntary collective licensing, Copyright Clearance Center (CCC) helps organizations integrate, access, and share information through licensing, content, software, and professional services. With expertise in copyright and information management, CCC and its subsidiary RightsDirect collaborate with stakeholders to design and deliver innovative information solutions that power decision-making by helping people integrate and navigate data sources and content assets.

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Learn more

Learn more about our licensing, content, and data solutions:

U.S. organizations:

🌐 copyright.com/share-content

✉ solutions@copyright.com

Outside U.S. organizations:

✉ solutions@rightsdirect.com