

Copyright Considerations for Managing a Remote Workforce

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Outsell’s ongoing analysis of the market indicates this isn’t a problem that’s going away. The pandemic triggered permanent changes to where and how knowledge workers engage with their work and organizations need to start solving for these new challenges now.”

Ned May
VP Analytic Operations, Outsell



In-house counsel and others responsible for the exchange of information throughout global organizations know that copyright challenges are a daily occurrence in the office. Yet, today’s remote working arrangements have put a spotlight on pre-existing copyright challenges, and the amplified reliance on technology for all communications has generated additional risks.

Changes in how employees communicate and collaborate in virtual environments



Typical water cooler conversations have migrated to chat platforms and workplace communities. Employees may occasionally share current news articles, covers of books they’re reading, or photos of home workspaces.



Similarly, in-person meetings have gone digital. In addition to being cognizant of the limitations around reproducing and distributing copyrighted works, public performance and display rights also need to be considered in livestreamed and recorded meetings. In an in-person meeting, employees may read a quote from a blog or share a physical photograph from a trade magazine. However, doing either of these during a livestream meeting may run afoul of the copyright owner’s public performance and display right.

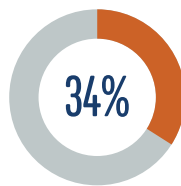


In video conference meetings, employees might inadvertently display copyrighted content in the background, such as a painting, sculpture and even their desktop globe. Displaying any one of these authored works could infringe upon the rights of the copyright owner.

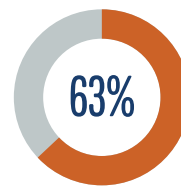


Access to print publications previously available in office are now limited. How are employees accessing and sharing published content from a remote work environment? Do they have the proper permissions in place to do so?

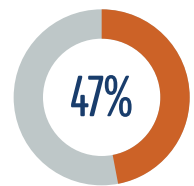
In addition to the shift to WFH, many companies operate as large global enterprises with complex corporate structures. Business units and employees may be housed under separate corporate entities but still need to collaborate using content for specific projects. That means they need to consider affiliate use and cross-border use when acquiring proper permissions for collaborating with published content.



of respondents working remotely reported an increase in the frequency of sharing content during the pandemic.



of those respondents in executive roles said they are sharing more often now, compared to 27% of middle managers and 22% of individual contributors.



are either unaware of copyright policy or unsure of its details.

Tips for managing compliance from home

Companies must get creative and consider how to stay visible with a client base who is spread out across the country or the globe to reinforce the importance of copyright compliance. Here are some tips to help improve efficiency and collaboration, while simplifying compliance and workflows for remote employees.

- 1 Develop educational materials** and resources for videoconferencing, including physical backdrops and virtual backgrounds to minimize the unintentional display of copyrighted content.
- 2 Implement new tools** to capture and measure the business's attention on IP issues such as an IP blog, and company-wide IP instant messenger group.
- 3 Host ongoing virtual trainings** and informal discussions to discuss copyright issues facing a remote workforce.
- 4 Make sure your copyright policy is up-to-date** and easily accessible in a central location for all employees.
- 5 Leverage CCC resources** including copyright education and collective licensing solutions.

CCC's Annual Copyright License is trusted licensing solution that complements an organization's publisher agreements and subscriptions by providing a consistent set of reuse rights across a broad repertory of titles. The Annual Copyright License enables teams to more easily collaborate using content from a wide range of sources, simplifying copyright compliance, driving innovation, and providing resources that educate employees about the importance of copyright. The Multinational Copyright License extends those rights to employees outside the U.S. to facilitate efficient global collaboration.



One of the greatest challenges (companies) face is the exponential adoption of digital platforms that simplify the storage and collaborative use of content. Like a news website, just because there is a button offered to share an article doesn't mean employees have the right to further distribute copies of that article, especially as a commercial enterprise."

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As a member of T. Rowe Price's intellectual property and commercial contracts group, John focuses his practice on trademark and copyright counseling, portfolio management, licensing and commercial transactions.



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.

Learn more

Learn more about copyright education and solutions to manage compliance:

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