

Corporate Executives Create the Greatest Copyright Risk According to New CCC Market Research Study on AI Usage, Collaboration, and Copyright

2025 Copyrighted Content Usage Trends Report Confirms That Widespread Adoption of AI and Online Collaboration Platforms Has Increased Potential Enterprise Risk Related to Copyright Compliance

January 28, 2025 – Danvers, Mass. – [CCC](#), a leader in advancing copyright, accelerating knowledge, and powering innovation, today announced key findings on attitudes about copyright, the adoption of AI tools in the workplace, and content use and collaboration from the newly released “[2025 Copyrighted Content Usage Trends](#)” study based on data gathered by [Outsell, Inc.](#), a research and advisory firm focused on the data, information, and analytics economy.

According to results from the most recent study, executive-level respondents had the highest level of copyright awareness. They also, however, had the highest number of potential copyright violations at nearly three times the rate of middle management and seven times the rate of individual contributors, “underscoring elevated compliance risks associated with senior decision-makers, who are often responsible for broader content dissemination,” according to findings documented within the study.

“Although corporate executives had the highest awareness of organizational copyright policies, their higher self-reported risk for copyright infringement surfaces critical compliance gaps,” said Hugh Logue, Vice President & Lead Analyst, Outsell. “Appropriate licensing and tailored training programs targeting executives can help to address this disconnect, fostering a top-down compliance culture and setting the standard for organizations.”

The study also revealed that while AI adoption has reached as high as 97% in some industries, just 77% of respondents know their organization’s copyright policy and only 62% realize it applies to AI when using third-party content.

“For many organizations, published content is a critical component of long-term innovation and day-to-day operations,” said Logue. “Yet sharing third-party, published information and using it with AI tools without first obtaining necessary permissions carries enormous potential risk. Building awareness of copyright compliance and AI tools is critical.”

“With growing adoption of AI and collaboration tools, companies can support good copyright practices by developing sensible corporate policies and procedures, investing in copyright education, and understanding the role of licensing when sharing information and utilizing AI tools,” said Tracey Armstrong, President and CEO, CCC.

Email remains the most used method for sharing work-related information. Yet, it dropped from 41% in 2022 to 34% in 2024, “reflecting a gradual shift away from traditional communication channels,” according to Outsell. In contrast, collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams, Slack, and Google Workspace are the methods cited as most preferred, with user preference rising from 33% in 2022 to 38% in 2024.

“This trend highlights a growing reliance on dynamic, team-focused platforms that streamline information sharing in real-time,” said Logue.

CCC advocates for copyright worldwide by engaging governments, stakeholders, and individuals with [educational programming](#), [thought leadership resources](#), and through its online hub, [AI, Copyright & Licensing](#).

In July 2024, CCC [announced the availability of AI rights](#) for internal corporate use within its [Annual Copyright License](#) (ACL), an enterprise-wide content licensing solution offering companies an efficient way to obtain rights to use copyrighted materials within AI systems. The license provides users with a harmonized set of internal use AI rights from a broad range of rightsholders and remunerates rightsholders for these new uses of their content.

Since 1978, CCC has supported content users by providing efficient, harmonized licensing solutions that cover their internal uses of content. CCC’s portfolio of non-exclusive voluntary collective licensing solutions includes [ACL for Business](#), [Multinational Copyright License \(MCL\) for Business](#), [ACL for Higher Education](#), [ACL for Curriculum & Instruction](#), and [ACL for Student Assessments](#). In addition to licensing solutions, CCC provides one-stop access for users to request, receive, and pay for full-text content and permissions to re-use content.

Outsell Inc.’s research into information consumption delivers a nuanced perspective on how knowledge workers search for, use, share, and integrate content into their workflows and engage with copyright policies. These insights are segmented by geography, industry, company size, and individual roles, offering a comprehensive view of behaviors across various organizational contexts.

Over the years, CCC has commissioned industry-leading research on professional information behaviors and usage patterns among corporate knowledge workers, including the consumption and sharing of copyrighted content. The most recent studies conducted with Outsell have focused on insights into the use and sharing of copyrighted content, including trend shifts over time. These efforts build on earlier studies assessing the speed of content sharing and the extent of the shift from print to digital, as well as the evolving content use and consumption patterns and behaviors among users across industry verticals.

About CCC

A pioneer in voluntary collective licensing, [CCC](#) advances copyright, accelerates knowledge, and powers innovation. With expertise in copyright, data quality, data analytics, and FAIR data

implementations, CCC and its subsidiary [RightsDirect](#) collaborate with stakeholders on innovative solutions to harness the power of data and AI.

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Outsell is the leading research and advisory firm serving executives in the data, information, and analytics economy. Its solutions leverage proprietary data, leading industry analysts, peer-to-peer communities, and a network of partner SMEs, all operating in a platform ecosystem. Through deep relationships, it ensures its clients make smart decisions about their strategy, competition, markets, operating best practices, and M&A.

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