



"Practical Problem-Solving Advice for Publishers"

Rights and Permissions Glossary By

John B. McHugh and David Koehser, Attorney-at-Law

**Copyright © 2024 John B. McHugh and David Koehser
All Rights Reserved**

Why Copyright Is Important

Copyright is the bedrock of any publishing business. In order to succeed in the publishing business, you need to know the basics of Copyright Law.

A knowledge of Copyright Law, and its corollary subjects—fair use and public domain—will enable you to determine whether or not you need to request permission to reprint material you plan to use in your publication. Understanding the doctrine of fair use and determining whether or not material is in the public domain will provide guidance for using copyrighted material without risking infringement.

The flipside of licensing other's copyrighted material is permitting others to license your copyrighted content. Licensing is particularly important as you pursue a strategy of digitizing your publications as there are numerous vendors who are eager to provide this service for you. For that reason, you should have a grasp on basic copyright terminology as used in the publishing business.

Copyright also underpins any co-publishing arrangement entered into by your organization. In order to understand publishing licenses, you need to understand the basics of copyright. For anyone entering into such an arrangement, knowledge of copyright is indispensable.

Copyright, like any legal specialty, has its own special terminology one needs to understand in order to master basic rights literacy. That is the intent of this glossary, to provide you with a working vocabulary so you can understand rights licensing and be

able to converse with your copyright attorney. This glossary defines 36 key rights and permissions terms.

Legal Disclaimer

This publication is designed to provide accurate and authoritative information regarding subject matter covered. It is sold with the understanding that the author and publisher are not engaged in rendering legal, accounting, or other such services. The information contained in this publication is not intended to serve as advice for a specific situation, and the appropriate steps to be taken in any situation will depend on the facts of that situation. If legal advice or such services are required, contact a competent professional with these areas of expertise.

Assignment Of Copyright

Assignment of copyright is the transfer of the entire copyright, consisting of all the exclusive rights in a copyrighted work. An assignment of copyright is tantamount to a sale of copyright. Copyright Law requires that the transfer of copyright be in writing and that the transfer be signed by the copyright owner making the assignment.

Berne Convention

The Berne Convention is an international copyright treaty for establishing the International Union for the Protection of Literary and Artistic Works. provides for the principle of “National Treatment,” which means every member country gives citizens of other member countries at least the same copyright protection that it affords its own nationals. Berne requires no formalities, such as notice and registration that were formerly required for basic copyright protection. The United States signed the Convention on March 1, 1989.

Co-Publishing

Co-publishing is a special type of publishing agreement between organizations (one need not be a publisher) in which the partners agree to share the costs of acquiring, developing, and marketing new publications. The responsibilities of the various publishing functions: author acquisition, manuscript development, production, marketing, and fulfillment are split among the publishing partners. Associations and societies routinely co-publish with commercial publishers.

Collective Work

The Copyright Act defines a *collective work* as work “in which a number of contributions, constituting separate and independent works in themselves, are assembled into a

collective whole.” Examples of collective works include magazines, journals, anthologies, and encyclopedias. Each contribution is covered by its own separate copyright, and the copyright in the collective work covers the selection, arrangement, and organization of the collective work as a whole.

Compilation

A *compilation* is copyrightable work that is formed by the bringing together or arranging of preexisting material (regardless of whether that material is protected by copyright) in an original—or nonobvious— way. Copyright protection is based on the original selection, coordination, or arrangement of the material, not the copyright status of the preexisting material itself. (From *The Copyright Permission and Libel Handbook*, Jassin and Schecter, 1998, John Wiley and Sons, p. 14)

Contributors Agreement

The *contributors agreement* is used by magazine and journal publishers to secure the right to publish an author’s article. The agreement may be in the form of an assignment of copyright or a license. The contributors agreement should always contain the author’s warranties that the material is original, doesn’t infringe on someone’s copyright, and if the author uses copyrighted material of others, the author will obtain permission to use that material from the copyright holder.

Copyright

Copyright is the creator’s exclusive bundle of rights in and to an original work fixed in a tangible medium of expression. The copyright “bundle of rights” consists of the exclusive right to:

- a. Reproduce the work,
- b. Prepare derivative works based on the copyrighted work,
- c. Distribute copies of the work to the public,
- d. Perform the work publicly, and
- e. Display the copyrighted work publicly.

The copyright in a work comes into existence upon the fixation of the work in any tangible medium, which can include writing or typing it on paper or fixing it in a digital file. Registration of the copyright is not required, although there are benefits to registration.

Copyright Clearance Center (CCC)

The Copyright Clearance Center is a nonprofit clearinghouse centralizing copyright authorization to use the copyrighted materials of the publishers registered with the CCC. The CCC collects a fee from the permission requestor, keeps a percentage, and remits the remainder to the copyright holder.

Copyright Infringement

Copyright infringement is the unauthorized exercise of one or more of the exclusive rights of a copyright owner comprised in a copyright. Under the Copyright Law, to prove infringement, you must prove that you own a valid copyright. You also must prove that the infringer had access to the copyrighted material, and copied from the copyrighted material. Finally, you must show that the copy is substantially similar to the copyright-protected elements of your work. If a work is in the public domain, the copyright in that work has expired and thus it cannot be infringed. If the use of a copyrighted work qualifies as a fair use (see below), that use will not constitute infringement, even though the work is still within the term of copyright protection.

Coursepack

A coursepack is a compilation of material, from copyrighted sources, selected by a college instructor for use as an adopted textbook in the instructor's course. The physical production of the course pack and processing of permissions to use copyrighted material is usually performed by a custom publisher or the campus book store. The production and distribution of coursepacks, even if limited to a single classroom, will constitute copyright infringement unless the owner of the copyright in each work included in the coursepack has given permission.

Creative Commons

A Creative Commons (CC) license is a "public domain" license that is somewhat similar to an open source license. Open source software is not in the public domain but it is made available, subject to its liberal license, and this license permits users to modify, distribute, or otherwise use the software, without getting permission. Someone owns the material but essentially they allow others to use it free of charge. Creative commons licenses generally require that attribution be provided, the use is noncommercial, and no derivative works be made from the licensed work.

Derivative Work

A work that is "derived" from or based on a pre-existing copyrighted work is a *derivative work*. Examples of derivative works include a condensation of a book, a movie based on a novel, a foreign language translation of a book, a stage play based on a book, or any other adaptation or transformation of a pre-existing copyrighted work. The right to prepare a derivative work is one of the exclusive rights held by the owner of a copyright.

Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA)

DMCA, passed by Congress in 1998, is a law passed by Congress that makes changes in U.S. Copyright Act to address the digitally networked environment. DMCA makes it illegal to manufacture or provide devices or services that circumvent encryptions or other technological measures used to control access to copyrighted works, or to protect the rights of copyright owners in copyrighted works.

The DMCA reinforces the notion that Copyright Laws are still valid and enforceable in a digital environment. The DMCA also provides an exemption from liability for infringement for internet service providers and others for infringing content posted on their websites or transmitted through services furnished by them, provided they did not post the infringing content themselves and provided they remove the content immediately upon receiving a notice of removal (a “takedown notice”) in the proper form from the copyright owner.

In order to take advantage of the exemption from liability offered by the DMCA, an internet service provider must also have a current filing in place with the Copyright Office listing the service provider’s designated agent to receive takedown notices.

Digital Rights Management (DRM)

DRM is software that protects content from unauthorized copying and downloading. Password access, encryption, digital watermarks, and lock-down technology are terms for different ways to limit access and use your site and contents.

Embedded Copyright

Embedded copyright is copyrighted material, placed within the body of a work, that may not be apparent to the permission grantor (and copyright holder) of the work or may not be apparent upon a cursory examination of the work. Embedded copyright arises because authors typically use the work of others, getting permission, and incorporating the work in their books. For example, an author may use copyrighted poetry or song lyrics, and may have permission to use the copyrighted material only for that one work, in a single language and in a single country.

Fair Use

Fair use refers to situations in which the use of a copyrighted work will not constitute infringement. Fair use is a defense against a claim of copyright infringement. Fair use is generally limited to use for purposes of teaching, scholarship, research, commentary, criticism and news reporting. The four factors to be considered in determining whether a use is a fair use, as listed in Section 107 of the US Copyright Act, are:

- a. purpose and character of use including whether or not such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit or educational purpose;
- b. The nature of the copyrighted work;

c. The amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole; and

d. The effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

(Note that no single factor is determinative of fair use. Rather, all four factors are to be taken into account, although depending on the facts, one factor may be more relevant than the others. Note also that fair use determinations are made on a case-by-case, facts and circumstances basis. There are no blanket rules for fair use, and the only way to definitively determine if a use is a fair use is to have a court rule on the specific situation.)

Recent fair use decisions have turned on whether the use is “transformative;” that is, whether it is for a purpose that is different from the original purpose and that adds “new expression, meaning, or message” to the original work. Examples of transformative uses include the reproduction of concert posters in a book about the history of a band and the use of a brief clip from a TV show to document the fact that a musical group appeared on that show.

Grant of Rights

Grant of rights refers to the acquisition of rights in a copyrighted work from the creator or other rights owner. Grants of rights are made under an agreement by which the creator of the work or the holder of rights in the work conveys the rights to another person, usually in exchange for a royalty or other financial payment. A grant of rights may be in the form of an assignment or a license, and a license may be exclusive or nonexclusive. A grant of rights, whether in the form of an assignment or an exclusive license, must be signed if the acquiring party wishes to obtain exclusive rights. The grant of rights must define the nature and scope of rights conveyed.

A grant of rights may be terminated by the author of the work or, if deceased, the author's heirs, at any time during a five year period that begins 35 years after the execution of the grant, or, in the case of a grant of publishing rights, 35 years from the date of first publication under the grant. Termination is not automatic, and if the termination rights are not exercised during the five year termination window, the grant will remain in force. Even if a grant of rights is terminated, a derivative work that was prepared under the authority of the grant prior to termination may continue to be utilized after termination. For example, if a US book publisher grants a translation license to a foreign publisher prior to the author's termination of the grant to the US publisher, the foreign publisher can continue to sell its foreign language edition after the grant of rights to the US publisher has been terminated.

Intellectual Property

Intellectual property is the subject material of copyrights, trademarks, trade secrets and patents dealing with intangible property. Copyrights, trademarks, and patents are each governed by different federal laws. Trademarks and trade secrets are also governed by state laws. Generally, intellectual property lawyers either specialize in copyright / Trademark Law or in patent law.

[NOTE OF EXPLANATION: Trade secret law is entirely at the state level. It generally is closer to patent law than to copyright or Trademark Law, but it has become a practice area for most business and employment lawyers, as it is easier to understand and describe than copyrights, trademarks and patents, and it is not the subject of an extensive statutory scheme, as is the case with the other three. Trademarks are covered by both federal and state law. Copyright Law is exclusively federal, although issues such as the scope and validity of contracts containing licenses or assignments of copyrights are governed by state law. Likewise for patents.]

Libel

Libel (also often referred to as defamation) is a false statement of fact made about an identifiable person in print or through broadcast that tends to bring the subject into public hatred, ridicule, or contempt, or to injure the subject's reputation or standing in the community or in his or her business and occupation.

License

A *license* is an agreement whereby the owner of the copyright in a work permits another party to exercise one or more of the rights comprised in that copyright, or the entire copyright, for a stated specific purpose for a specific time in return for a fee or a royalty. Examples of licenses include an agreement from a US publisher to an Italian publisher granting the Italian publisher the right to prepare and publish an Italian language translation edition of a book, and an agreement from an author to a movie production company granting the production company the right to create and exhibit a motion picture based on the author's novel. A permission to reprint copyrighted material is a license. Note also that licenses are contracts and are usually for limited time period. A license is subject to being revoked if the licensee fails to make a royalty payment or otherwise violates a term of the contract.

Linking

Linking is the connecting of a Uniform Resource Locator (URL) to another document on the same server or on a different server. In another context, it could refer to a pointer embedded within the text of one document that refers to specific text in another document or in the same document.

Nonexclusive

A license is *nonexclusive* if the party granting the license (the “licensor”) can also grant the same license to others. A license is *exclusive* if the rights granted under the license can be exercised only by the licensee. If a license is exclusive, the licensor cannot grant the same license to others, and cannot exercise the rights granted under the license. Note the licensing of exclusive rights may preclude other licensing opportunities.

Nontransferable

If a license is *nontransferable*, the licensee cannot, without the permission of the licensor, transfer the license to a third party. Note that a nontransferable license can still effectively be transferred if the licensee is merged into another entity, unless the license agreement specifically prohibits a transfer of the license by merger or consolidation.

Open Access

Open access is a term used in scientific and scholarly journal publishing to signify the availability and unrestricted use of peer-reviewed, full-text journal articles in a digital form free of charge to users. The financial model for an open access journal is not subscription-based but rather supported by author paid publication fees. The authors hold the copyright rather than the publisher. For research funded by Federal Government, the Federal Research Public Access Act (Cornyn-Lieberman Act 2006) requires “that federal agencies with extramural research expenditures of over \$100 million make publicly available via the Internet an electronic version of published articles whose research has been funded by that agency. The manuscript will be maintained and preserved in a digital archive. Through this process, taxpayer funded research will be publicly available via the Internet.” (Frequently Asked Questions, [PDF] [link](#)The Federal Research Public Access Act of 2006 (Cornyn-Lieberman)

Orphan Work

An orphan work is one for which one cannot in good faith find the copyright owner. Note that an orphan work is not in the public domain. Orphan works, according to *Public Knowledge* <http://publicknowledge.org/> “are copyrighted works — books, music, records, films, etc — which are still in their term of copyright, but for which the copyright owner cannot be located. Works can become ‘orphaned’ for a number of reasons: the owner did not register the work, the owner sold rights in the work and did not register the transfer, the owner died and his heirs cannot be found, the owner is a corporation that is no longer in existence ... the list goes on. Very often, orphan works become obscure no matter how valuable the material contained in them may be. The use of an orphan work without the permission of the copyright owner constitutes copyright infringement, and thus no creator is willing to use an orphan work for fear that he/she will have to pay a huge amount of money in damages if the owner emerges.”

From time to time the US Copyright Office and Congress have considered legislation that would allow the use of orphan works under certain conditions, and that would exempt a user from damages in excess of a normal fair market permissions fee should the copyright owner subsequently emerge, but no such legislation has been enacted to date.

According the U.S Copyright Office (November, November 2013). “The Copyright Office is reviewing the problem of orphan works under U.S. copyright law in continuation of its previous work on the subject and to advise Congress on possible next steps for the United States. The Office has long shared the concern with many in the copyright community that the uncertainty surrounding the ownership status of orphan works does not serve the objectives of the copyright system. For good faith users, orphan works are a frustration, a liability risk, and a major cause of gridlock in the digital marketplace. The issue is not contained to the United States. Indeed, a number of foreign governments have recently adopted or proposed solutions.”

Patent

A *patent* is a protection by law of the intellectual property in an idea expressed in an invention, whether a process or a machine.

Permission

A *permission* is a license obtained by the user from the copyright holder to reprint copyrighted material, usually but not always for a fee. In book and periodical publishing, the author is almost always responsible for obtaining permission to use copyrighted material in his manuscript.

Proprietor

A *proprietor* is the company or agent that owns, controls or manages a copyright and that has the right to enter into a licensing agreement on behalf of the author/copyright owner.

Public Domain Work

A *public domain work* is work for which the term of copyright has expired or a work which, by law, is not eligible for copyright protection. A work that is in the public domain will forever remain in the public domain, and it cannot be brought into copyright or back into copyright by being incorporated into a new copyrighted work. Examples of works which are in the public domain by reason of not being eligible for copyright protection are most materials published by the U.S. Government and its officials, as part of their duties. Determining whether the copyright in a work has expired and the work has fallen into the public domain can be complicated, and usually requires a careful review

of the facts relating to the publication of the work and the applicable statutes. You do not need permission to use a work that is in the public domain.

Release

A *release* is a contract in which someone foregoes the right to sue for the claims recited in the release. For example, you may obtain a release to protect against claims involving defamation or infringement of a person's right of publicity or privacy. Use a release when obtaining a written interview or photographs of an individual.

Rights

Rights refers to the body of ownership interest protected by Copyright Law in the originator of copyrighted material, which may be held, sold, or licensed to others, as when a creator sells or licenses publishing rights to the publisher.

Serial Rights

First serial rights refers to the publication of portions of a book by a magazine or newspaper prior to the book's publication. *Second serial right* is the publication of portions of a book by a magazine or newspaper after the book's publication.

Term

The *term* is the specified length of time a license or contract is valid. After the expiration of the term, the rights licensed will revert to the grantor and the licensee will no longer be able to exercise those rights.

When used with respect to a copyright, "term" refers to the duration of the copyright. When the term of a copyright ends, the work covered by that copyright falls into the public domain, and the work is then free for anyone to use. The general rule for the term of copyright in a work created on or after January 1, 1978 is the author's life plus 70 years. However, the rules relating to the term of copyright for works created prior to that date vary, depending on when the work was first published or registered, whether a renewal registration was filed, and certain other factors.

Territory

Territory refers to the countries where a licensee is permitted to print or distribute the work under the terms of the license.

Thin Copyright

Thin copyright refers to nonfiction works and other works for which copyright protection is limited. Dates, names of historic events, place names, lists of ingredients and other factual information are not protected by copyright, and thus the copyright in works that consist primarily of factual information is said to be “thin.” For these types of works, only the author’s selection and organization of the material in the work and the author’s particular expression of that material will be protected by copyright. The facts themselves are not protectable, and can be freely used by anyone.

Trademark

A *trademark* is a word, symbol, image, design or other element that is used with goods or services and that serves to identify to consumers the source or origin of the goods or services for which the mark is used. For example, APPLE is a trademark for computers and KLEENEX is a trademark for facial tissues. See the next paragraph on the appropriate uses of the ™ and the ® symbols.

According to *AboutCom for Inventors*

The use of the symbols **TM** or **SM** are not governed by federal law. However, sometimes these symbols are governed by local, state, or foreign laws. Otherwise, you can freely use the symbols **TM** for trademark or **SM** for service mark to indicate that you are claiming rights to the marks without (or before) having federal registration.

FEDERAL REGISTRATION SYMBOL ®

The traditional trademark symbol or federal registration symbol may be used once the mark is actually registered with the [USPTO](http://www.uspto.gov). Even though an application is pending, the registration symbol may not be used before the mark has actually become registered. The federal registration symbol should only be used on goods or services that are the subject of the federal trademark registration.
http://inventors.about.com/od/patenttrademarkcopyright/u/Intellectual_Property.htm

Universal Copyright Convention

The Universal Copyright Convention is an international copyright treaty. Applies to all works published in the United States after September 16, 1955. Same as Berne Convention except Berne doesn’t require copyright notice in order for a copyright to exist. The Berne Convention takes priority if a country has signed both agreements.

Work For Hire (also called work made for hire)

A work for hire is a work in which the copyright is owned by someone other than the person who created the work. A work for hire may be prepared by an employee, as part

of the employee's job duties (in which case the copyright will be owned by the employee's employer) or by an independent contractor working under a written work for hire agreement (in which case the copyright will be owned by the person who commissioned the independent contractor), provided that in the case of an independent contractor the work must also fall into one of nine categories of use specified in the Copyright Act. Section 101 of the US Copyright Act of 1976 defines a work for hire as:

1. a work prepared by an employee within the scope of her or his employment; or
2. a work specially ordered or commissioned for use as:
 - a. a contribution to a collective work;
 - b. a part of a motion picture or other audio visual work;
 - c. a translation;
 - d. a supplemental work;
 - e. a compilation;
 - f. an instructional text;
 - g. a test;
 - h. answer material for a test; or
 - i. an atlas."

World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

WIPO is an intergovernmental organization serving an international community of States, based in Geneva that develops treaties to ensure protection for members' intellectual property worldwide. WIPO also provides legal services to a global market of private users in contracts, patents, trademarks, and copyright.

Reviewer Acknowledgement

Thanks to Bev Kolz for her editing of Glossay

McHugh Rights and Permissions Services

John B. McHugh is an experienced publishing executive and consultant with special expertise in managing rights and permissions. His advice and insights cover all areas of intellectual property management for both print and digital products.

Tap into McHugh's extensive information industry expertise to help you:

- Grow revenues by fully exploiting the income potential of your digital rights. McHugh will help you effectively organize your rights management to take advantage of the exploding innovation in digital distribution.
- Educate yourself and your staff about the confusing and ambiguous subject of copyright with McHugh's executive coaching and question and answer service.
- Get a detailed analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of every area of your rights management with McHugh's ***Rights and Permissions Audit***. He will make recommendations to optimize staffing, streamline management processes,

and increase rights, revenues and profitability. *Most importantly, McHugh will alert you to serious legal exposure and when you should contact a copyright attorney.*

For 10 other free articles go to http://johnbmchugh.com/free_pub_guides.htm
“Rights and Permissions”

McHugh Expert Interviews — Free at http://johnbmchugh.com/expert_interviews.htm

- I-14, *Copyright Aspects of Social Media: An Interview with Attorney David Koehser*, 2010
- I-15, *Ebooks and Copyright: an Interview with Attorney David Koehser*, 2010

About David Koehser, Attorney-at-Law

David Koehser is a Minneapolis-based lawyer who practices in the areas of copyright and Trademark Law. Dave’s website contains articles on the topics of: Publishing Law, Merchandise Licensing, Copyrights and Trademarks, and Theater and Performing Arts. Request a copy of Dave’s informative quarterly e newsletter, Publishing and Merchandise Licensing Law Update. Dave has a B.S from the University of Iowa and LLM (?) from the University of Minnesota. Link to Dave’s Web site www.dklex.com.

ABOUT JOHN B. McHUGH

John B. “Jack” McHugh is a 40-year veteran of the publishing business. Jack has worked as an executive for Houghton Mifflin, Wadsworth, and Saint Mary’s Press. Jack is also an experienced association publishing executive. For seven years, he was Publisher and Director of Programs at the American Society for Quality and for a two-year period, he served as the Interim Publisher at the Project Management Institute. He is a member of the ASAE Advisory Board for Publishing, Communications, and Media Issues and Practices.

Jack’s specialties include association/nonprofit publishing, book publishing, executive recruiting, journal publishing, rights and permissions, new ventures, organizational design, and social media strategy and policy.

Jack Mc Hugh is also the manager of two LinkedIn™ groups, **Association** and **Nonprofit Publishing**. <https://www.linkedin.com/groups/2949807/>

Contact John B. “Jack” McHugh

Contact Jack McHugh, 414-351-3056

Email jack@johnbmchugh.com,

Website http://www.johnbmchugh.com.

LinkedIn <https://www.linkedin.com/in/john-b-mchugh-21651811/>

R-23, Final. 12/24/13 DK, BK, JM, JAF . 4/1/15 rev 36 terms, 4/26/17. 11/4/19 JM; 10-1-23 to DK; 2/1/24 DK ref. JM