

Staying Current on Copyright Law

With the abundance of information available on every topic, it can be an overwhelming task to stay current on any topic, whether for work or personal purposes. Sifting through free and paid content, periodicals and daily news, and print and digital formats can add burdensome complexity to the amount and quality of information we seek on any one topic. The same is true when it comes to copyright issues. A few decades ago, a lawyer could specialize in intellectual property or computer or entertainment law. Now there are specialists within specialties. For example, a lawyer may focus on copyright issues in academia or library-related copyright issues or music copyright issues. So, when it comes to copyright information, how can we sort through the plethora of sources and find what we need to perform our work functions?

Possible Resources

The traditional press remains an invaluable tool to find news and information on copyright issues. *The New York Times*, *The Economist*, and a variety of other newspapers and magazines provide coverage of recent court cases, legislation, and other copyright-related stories on a regular basis. Setting up a news alert on Google or other internet search engines can help you stay up-to-date on copyright news on a daily basis.

Various interest groups such as the Software and Information Industry Association (www.siiia.net), the Recording Industry Association of America (www.riaa.com), and the Special Libraries Association (www.sla.org)—provide content on the latest developments in copyright from around the world. The World Intellectual Property Organization (www.wipo.org) is a great source for news on copyright treaties as well as copyright issues being discussed in an international forum.

GigaLaw.com Daily News (<http://gigalaw.com>) provides internet- and technology-law news clips that are compiled by lawyer Doug Isenberg. A search for *copyright* in the site's search engine compiles postings on copyright-related issues including legal suits and legislation. Lawyer Barry Sookman (www.barrysookman.com) provides in-depth analysis of current copyright issues as well as a Twitter feed that will keep any copyright news junkie happy. Sookman's list of "interesting links" will also keep you in the loop.

Monitoring and contributing to appropriate online discussion groups including social networking ones may also be a timely and useful way to stay current on copyright. For example, if you belong to any library or electronic publishing discussion lists, you will inevitably see postings about copyright and licensing issues. In addition to providing you with news, these discussion forums will allow you to ask questions about copyright, discuss news, learn about additional copyright resources including webinars and in-person sessions, and network with similar people.

What To Do With Your Resources

When you locate an online source that is compatible with your needs, consider how you will use that source. Will you check the website or blog each day? Will you subscribe to the source? Or will you follow the resource via RSS or Twitter or other social media mechanisms?

In order to stay on top of the many issues in the copyright sector, it is important to manage a system that allows you to receive stories and insight into the field. It is also important to vet your sources so that you are aware of any underlying ideologies or interests that influence which stories are covered and how they are portrayed. Taking the time to develop and maintain quality resources will assist you in keeping up-to-date and provide answers to copyright and licensing questions as those questions arise.

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Resources available through Copyrightlaws.com:

1. RSS feed from copyrightlaws.com <http://www.copyrightlaws.com/>
2. @copyrightlaws on Twitter <http://twitter.com/#>
3. LEH-Letter: Copyright, New Media Law & E-Commerce News <http://www.copyrightlaws.com/leh-letter/>
4. The Copyright & New Media Law Newsletter. <http://www.copyrightlaws.com/the-copyright-new-media-law-newsletter/> If you subscribe to the electronic version of the Newsletter, you are entitled access to a private online community and discounts to courses and permission to repost certain articles.
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