

Many people who infringe copyright may be unaware they are doing anything illegal. Some illegal practices are so widespread that most people don't even think about whether or not they are legal. Therefore, we have composed a list of some of the most common ways in which content is infringed, focusing on those methods principally employed by business users.

Photocopying

Photocopiers have been around a long time (at least in comparison to the Internet), and people are accustomed to using them for all sorts of tasks, some of which may violate copyright. Remember that a copy is a copy and the exclusive right to copy belongs to the copyright holder. Even if you have legally purchased a copy of a work, that does not give you the right to make photocopies of it. Before you head to the copy room, ask yourself where your original document came from and whether you have permission from the copyright holder to make another one.

Printing

While users don't normally think of sending a file to a printer as making a copy in the same way as using a photocopier does, the same principles apply. The only difference is that in one case the original copy is printed on paper and in the other it's a digital file. Many content publishers place limits on the number of times a particular work may be printed under the usage license. Other content, such as a publicly-accessible web page, is usually safe to print. Be sure to check the limitations on the content you're working with to make sure that such a normal, mundane process as sending it to a printer does not violate someone's copyright.

Scanning

While photocopying and printing can create an unauthorized physical copy of a document, scanning can create an unauthorized digital copy. You don't have to be able to hold the copy in your hand in order to violate the author's exclusive right to copy. As with photocopying and printing, before going to the scanner you should always ask yourself whether you have the right to make a digital copy of someone else's document.

E-mail

There are various ways to infringe copyright via e-mail. Any e-mail you receive from another person is their copyrighted work, so forwarding it to someone else or printing it without the author's permission technically violates the author's exclusive rights. E-mail is a fast and easy way to distribute information and therefore is a fast and easy way to violate a copyright owner's right to distribution. This could be done by attaching a copy—even a legally obtained copy—of a file to an e-mail, or even by copying and pasting text into the body of an e-mail. Probably all of

us have infringed someone's copyright through e-mail, but one should be particularly careful in the case of proprietary information -- information that is obtained only through paid subscription.

Pay particular attention to copyright notices and warnings on e-mails you receive and on any attachments you send.

Networking

A user can infringe copyright by posting content on a public or private network for others to access. If the content is offered only on a subscription basis, and is meant only for one person, then placing the content on a network has the same effect as sharing passwords because it gives access to more people than are licensed. But even more specifically, placing an item on a network for others to access can be tantamount to distribution, in violation of the exclusive right to distribution held by the copyright owner. This holds true even if the network is not a public one. Sharing the content even with your own co-workers is still a violation of copyright. Indeed, most of the content infringement that goes on in the workplace is unauthorized intra-office sharing.

File Sharing

File sharing, a category similar to, but more specific than networking, is the uploading or downloading of a content file (*i.e.* a Word document, a PDF file, or an e-book) onto or off of an online service where anyone can copy it. File sharing is often conducted through peer-to-peer sites, many of which specialize in music files, but include other content as well. Another place where file sharing is rampant is on FTP sites, which allow users to upload and download files to and from a site. Infringers commonly use FTP sites because they are efficient for transferring large files and most FTP servers support some form of anonymous login.

Piracy and Counterfeiting

If you make a copy of someone else's content and sell it, whether in hard copy form, on an auction website, or in any other way, you are pirating the copyright owner's rights to copy and sell the content. If the infringer tries to pass off the pirated copy as if it were a legitimate copy produced or authorized by the copyright holder, the activity is known as counterfeiting.