Patents, Copyright and Trademarks - What’s the Difference?
An Introduction to Intellectual Property

Presented By Science and Technology, Patent & Trademark Resource Center
What is Intellectual Property?

A product of the mind or intellect as opposed to physical property.

A broad descriptor that includes original works by authors, musicians, artists and inventors. These works may be protected in a number of ways.
• It is an asset just like your home, your car, or your bank account.

• Just like other kinds of property, intellectual property needs to be protected from unauthorized use.
Types of Intellectual Property

- Patents
- Trademarks
- Copyright
- Trade Secrets
Federal vs. State Intellectual Property

- Federal intellectual property registration entitles the owner to use trademarks, patents, and copyright throughout the United States and provides some protection internationally as well.
- State governments also allow for the registration of intellectual property, although the protection provided is comparatively limited.
- Furthermore, most state governments will only register trademarks and will not allow the registration of copyrights or patents.
Copyrights

• Copyright protects “original works of authorship” that are fixed in a tangible form of expression.

• Copyright protection lasts for the life of the author/creator plus 70 years after death of author/creator.
What Works Are Protected?

Copyrightable works include:

• literary works;
• musical works, including any accompanying words
• dramatic works, including any accompanying music
• pantomimes and choreographic works
• pictorial, graphic, and sculptural works
• motion pictures and other audiovisual works
• sound recordings
• architectural works
Who Can Claim Copyright?

- Copyright protection subsists from the time the work is created in fixed form.
- Only the author or those deriving their rights through the author can rightfully claim copyright.
What Is Not Protected by Copyright?

- Works that have not been fixed in a tangible form of expression.
- Titles, names, short phrases, and slogans;
- Familiar symbols or designs
- Variations of typographic ornamentation, lettering, or coloring;
- Mere listings of ingredients or contents.
- Ideas, procedures, methods, systems, processes, concepts, principles, discoveries, or devices.
- Works consisting entirely of information that is common property and containing no original authorship.
Do I have to register my copyright to be protected?

No. In general, registration is voluntary.

• Copyright exists from the moment the work is created.
• Registration required to bring a lawsuit for infringement of a U.S. work.
Why should I register my work if copyright protection is automatic?

• Many choose to register their works because they wish to have the facts of their copyright on the public record and have a certificate of registration.

• Registered works may be eligible for statutory damages and attorney's fees in successful litigation.
How do I register my copyright?

• Submit a completed application form, a nonrefundable filing fee of $85 for a paper filing.
• Forms available on the Copyright Office Web site http://www.copyright.gov/forms/.
• Forms also available from the Copyright Office in person, by mailing in a request, or by calling: (202) 707-3000 or (877) 476-0778, toll free.
• If your home computer can’t download forms, most public libraries should be able help.
How Do I Register My Copyright? (continued)

- You can register electronically.
- The fee for this is lower - $35 – for registering a basic claim.
- Refer to the Copyright Office’s website (http://www.copyright.gov/docs/fees.html) to verify current fees.
WHAT IS A PATENT?

- A patent is a grant given by the U.S. Patent and Trademark Office to an inventor.
- A patent grants the right to exclude others for a period of up to 20 years from making, using, offering to sell, selling or importing the invention.
- In exchange for the exclusive rights, the inventor discloses how to make the invention in a document known as a patent.
DO YOU NEED A PATENT TO SELL AN INVENTION?

• No, you have the right to make, use, and sell your own invention as long as it does not violate someone else’s patent.

• A patent gives you the right to exclude others from making, using, or selling your invention without your permission.

• A patent does not guarantee the market-worthiness of your invention.
THREE TYPES OF PATENTS

• Utility – how something works
• Design – how something looks
• Plant – new variety
Utility Patents

- New and useful process, machine, article of manufacture, or composition of matters, or any useful improvements thereof.
- Granted for 20 years.
Utility Examples:

• Process (Process for manufacturing polyester)
• Machine (upright fork lift truck)
• Composition of Matters (anti-depressant pill)
• Useful Improvement (mechanical pencil)
Design Patents

• New, original and ornamental design for an article of manufacture.
• Granted for 15 years.
Design Examples:

- Look of an athletic shoe
- Body of a car – Toyota Prius
- Handle of a kitchen gadget – OXO vegetable peeler
- Appearance of a smart phone
Plant Patents

• Invents or discovers and asexually reproduces any distinct and new variety of plant.
• Granted for 20 years.
More Patent Facts

• U.S. Patents are protected throughout the United States only
• No State patents
• Must file separately for foreign patents
Patents are granted on the basis of three factors:

- Novelty/uniqueness
- Non-obviousness
- Utility/usefulness (only for utility patents)
Remember ...

• *Do not think that just because your product is not on the market it doesn’t exist already

• *Patents do not guarantee monetary success!
Before you apply for a patent ...

- Before you apply for a patent, you must do a thorough patent (prior art) search
- Patents are filed by class/subclass – not by keywords or titles
- The USPTO recommends following a 7-Step search strategy (for more info see www.uspto.gov)
Why do a patent search?

• Don’t want to waste money, time investing in something that already exists

• May find your invention already patented, but can find a way to make an improvement
What does the USPTO do?

- Examines applications
- Publishes issued patents & various other publications related to the patent field
- Provides copies of patents to public
- Provides public search facility
- Provides forms & educational materials
- Provides 24 hour help line 1-800-786-9199
- Maintains PTRC program for local information
What the USPTO doesn’t do

• Can’t give legal advice on infringement or the enforcement of patents
• Not able to do the patent search for you
• Can’t recommend attorney
• Not responsible for promotion or utilization of a patent or invention
• Not able to take action against promotion firm scams
Where to obtain forms

• You are strongly encouraged to apply online
• There is a surcharge to apply via paper forms
• All forms are available to download and print from the USPTO web site: www.uspto.gov
How much is this going to cost me?

- Patents cost an average of $4500 over the life of the patent if you meet the qualifications for “micro entity status”
- Includes maintenance fees 3.5, 7.5, 11.5 years
- Current fee schedule available on website
Do I have to hire an attorney?

- The patent application process is complex. The USPTO cannot assist in the preparation of patent application papers. If you are ready to apply for a patent, we suggest you contact a registered patent attorney or agent.

- Although the USPTO cannot recommend any particular attorney or agent, they do maintain a roster of patent attorneys and agents registered to practice before the USPTO. Only registered attorneys and agents may help others to obtain patents.
Helpful Hints

• Keep an inventor’s notebook.
• Network with others in your field.
• Be aware of any form and fee changes.
• Be aware of marketing and promotion firm scams.
What is a Trademark?

- A **trademark** is a word, phrase, symbol or design, or a combination of words, phrases, symbols or designs, that identifies and distinguishes the source of the goods of one party from those of others.

- A **service mark** is the same as a trademark, except that it identifies and distinguishes the source of a service rather than a product.
Federal Trademarks

• Federal trade and service marks are registered with the US Patent & Trademark Office (www.uspto.gov).
• Can use the TM or SM symbol to assert a claim, even if not registered.
• MUST be federally registered to use or phrase “Reg U.S.Pat.& TM Off.”
Is registration of my mark required?

**No.** Rights are based on legitimate use of the mark. However, owning a federal trademark registration on the Principal Register provides several advantages:

- constructive notice to the public of the registrant's claim of ownership of the mark;
- a legal presumption of the registrant's ownership of the mark and the registrant's exclusive right to use the mark nationwide on or in connection with the goods and/or services listed in the registration;
- the ability to bring an action concerning the mark in federal court;
- the use of the U.S registration as a basis to obtain registration in foreign countries; and
- the ability to file the U.S. registration with the U.S. Customs Service to prevent importation of infringing foreign goods.
What does the USPTO do?

- The United States Patent and Trademark Office (USPTO) reviews trademark applications for federal registration and determines whether an applicant meets the requirements for federal registration.
- They do not decide whether you have the right to use a mark (which differs from the right to register). Even without a registration, you may still use any mark adopted to identify the source of your goods and/or services.
- Once a registration issues, it is up to the owner of a mark to enforce its rights in the mark based on ownership of a federal registration.
What the USPTO Doesn’t Do

USPTO employees cannot:
• conduct trademark searches for the public;
• comment on the validity of registered marks;
• answer questions on whether a particular mark or type of mark is eligible for trademark registration; or
• offer legal advice or opinions about common law trademark rights, state registrations, or trademark infringement claims.
How do I file a Trademark Application with the USPTO?

• You can fill out an application online, check it for completeness, and file it over the Internet using the Trademark Electronic Application System (TEAS), at http://www.uspto.gov/teas/e-TEAS/index.html.

• Filing electronically via TEAS is $400 per class.
Do I have to hire an attorney?

- **No.** However, if you prepare and submit your own application, you must comply with all requirements of the trademark statute and rules.

- If you choose to appoint an attorney to represent your interests before the USPTO, they will correspond only with your attorney.

- **The USPTO cannot help you select an attorney.**
State Trademarks

• Registering a trademark or service mark allows you to establish an identity between your products and/or services and your organization.
• Your organization has the sole authority regarding the rules and regulations of its use.
• To register a trademark or service mark, you must first submit an application to the Ohio Secretary of State’s office.
• Cost is $125.00 for an Ohio trademark/servicemark
Common Law Trademarks

• Fancy name for unregistered marks
• Since rights to a mark are derived by using a mark in commerce, any identifying name or phrase can be a trademark.
So what is the difference?

• Copyright protects original works of authorship
• A patent protects inventions or discoveries
• A trademark protects words, phrases, symbols, or designs identifying the source of the goods or services of one party and distinguishing them from those of others.
Trade Secrets

• Trade secrets may include customer lists, recipes and formulas, special processes, devices, methods, techniques, business plans, research and development information, etc.

• Benefits include: no fees, no registrations and no time limits or expirations.

• It’s a secret!
What is a trade secret?

- Provides the owner of the information with a competitive advantage in the marketplace, and
- is treated in a way that can reasonably be expected to prevent the public or competitors from learning about it, absent improper acquisition or theft.
How do businesses put trade secrets to use?

• Trade secrets often protect valuable technical information that cannot be sheltered under other forms of intellectual property law, such as the formula for Coca-Cola. Trade secrets may also:
  • protect ideas that offer a business a competitive advantage, thereby enabling a company or individual to get a head start on the competition
  • keep competitors from learning that a product or service is under development and from discovering its functional or technical attributes -- for example, how a new software program works
Putting Trade Secrets to Use (continued)

• protect valuable business information such as marketing plans, cost and price information and customer lists -- for example, a company's plans to launch a new product line

• protect "negative know-how" -- that is, information you've learned during the course of research and development on what not to do or what does not work optimally -- for example, research revealing that a new type of drug is ineffective

• protect any other information that has some value and is not generally known by your competitors -- for example, a list of customers ranked by how profitable their business is.
How can a business protect its trade secrets?

- Simply calling information a trade secret will not make it so. A business must affirmatively behave in a way that proves its desire to keep the information secret.

- Some companies go to extreme lengths -- for example, the formula for Coca-Cola (perhaps the world's most famous trade secret) is kept locked in a bank vault that can be opened only by a resolution of the Coca-Cola Company's board of directors. Only two Coca-Cola employees ever know the formula at the same time; their identities are never disclosed to the public and they are not allowed to fly on the same airplane.
Can I legally enforce the rights in my trade secrets?

• The owner of a trade secret may obtain an injunction in court to prevent the wrongful use of his or her trade secret. Damages may also be awarded.

• It may also be a crime to steal someone else’s trade secret, and criminal charges may be brought against the wrongdoer.
RESOURCES

• Copyright information can be found at www.copyright.gov
• Patent and Trademark information can be found at www.uspto.gov
• Ohio Secretary of State, Business Services Division at https://www.sos.state.oh.us/businesses/
• Trade Secret information can be found at various places on the internet or your local library.
• Microbusiness Center located 1st floor of Main Library
• Small Business Administration www.sba.com
• Akron Score Chapter 81 [www.akron.score.org](http://www.akron.score.org)
• Akron Inventors Club 330-643-9075 Meets 2\textsuperscript{nd} Thursday of the Month @ Main Library
• Akron Makerspace [http://akronmakerspace.org/](http://akronmakerspace.org/)
• Akron-Summit County Public Library Science & Technology Division
  330-643-9075  stdiv@akronlibrary.org
  www.akronlibrary.org
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