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FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS FROM IT DEVELOPERS ABOUT IP RIGHTS

and their answers :)

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This guide aims to provide practical answers to the intellectual property (IP)-related questions frequently asked by IT developers. It does not aim to be a comprehensive IP training material for the IT sector, which would clearly not possible with such a short publication. We hope that this material will contribute to raise awareness of IP issues within the IT sector.

The information provided in this document only concerns European particulars on IP rights, and focuses on patents, copyright, designs and trade marks.

The opinions expressed in this document are the sole responsibility of the author and do not necessarily represent the official position of the European Commission.

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01.
general considerations

Since the IT sector stands at the crossroads of all kinds of advanced technologies, new developments in IT are complex and involve many elements. Being creations of the mind, these developments are also deemed to be intellectual capital or assets, and are liable to be protected under appropriate intellectual property (IP) rights regimes. These regimes are vital tools to secure the benefits of intellectual assets.

As a main outcome of IT projects, computer programs are generally based on components (software code) previously developed by others and that are made available under specific conditions (i.e. software licences). These licences involve explicit rights and obligations, accruing to those providing the software code and to those using them. It is therefore essential for developers to know how to deal with IP protection and IP licences.

01.

general considerations

Why do I need to consider IP in IT?

Furthermore, from a managerial perspective, commercialisation and dissemination of IT components implies careful consideration of IP issues from different aspects: from the side of the developers, and from the side of the users.

Statistics also confirm the above phenomenon, as computer programming, or in a more general sense, the Information and Communication (ICT) sector (ICT manufacturing and ICT services), is one of the most IP-intensive sectors, especially in copyright and trade marks – and some specific activities of the sector even have a leading role in patents and designs.[1]

1. "IPR-intensive industries and economic performance in the European Union", EPO, EUIPO, 2019. The full report is downloadable **here**.

01.

general considerations

What are the advantages of using IP?

IP rights are the means for safeguarding the recognition of the paternity of creations and their date of creation. Once you have an IP right, it is easier to prove the ownership and the date of creation in case there is a dispute about usurpation or novelty/priority.

Being the owner of an IP right ensures that you are the one who decides the conditions of use and distribution of your work (e.g. if you want your code to be used or distributed for free or not). It gives you the freedom to select the commercialisation route for your IP asset (e.g. by yourself exclusively, or through licensees, or other means), to choose commercial partners, and to negotiate with them on your own terms.

What are the advantages of using IP?

01.
general considerations

IP rights enable their holders to make their products and/or services clearly identifiable and distinguishable, and thus to draw a boundary around the asset which is protected by those rights. This helps both to market the product/service, and to detect possible infringements.

With respect to infringement, one of the main advantages of having an IP right is to prevent third parties from using your IP in the territories where you protect your rights.

Finally, from a financial perspective, it should be noted that IT products (software, hardware, source codes, etc.) that are well managed according to an internal IP policy (strategy, development practices, tools) are more attractive for investors. According to a recent study,[2] firms owning IP rights have, on average, 20% higher revenue per employee than firms that do not. For SMEs, this difference is greater; SMEs that own IP rights have 68% higher revenue per employee than SMEs that do not own any IP rights at all. In other words, wise IP rights management is a way of making money.

2. "Intellectual property rights and firm performance in the European Union", EPO, EUIPO, 2021. The full report is downloadable here.

01.

general considerations

What are the risks of ignoring IP?

If you do not protect your creations with IP rights, you jeopardise your business by exposing your products/services to possible infringement. You may lose control of your own assets (i.e. anyone can make alterations to your products without your authorisation), you might be exposed to possible frauds (e.g. usurpation of rights, risk of distribution of your products without your consent), risking your market reputation and recognition, and so on.

01.
general considerations

Which IP rights can be relevant to IT developers?

Almost all of them! But here, we focus on the big four: patents, copyright, trade marks and designs.

Patents protect inventions. Therefore, mainly hardware, but also software (as long as it solves a technical problem with a technical solution) can be protected through a patent. The latter is known as Computer-Implemented Inventions (CII), and with over 50,000 patent applications per year at the European Patent Office (EPO), these inventions represent about 35% of total EPO patent filings.[3]

Being an essential IP right for the industry, **copyright** relates to the many activities of the IT development process. From source code to user manuals, or from graphical designs to jingles and images, copyright is one of the most commonly used IP rights in the IT sector.

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3. "The economic impacts of computer-implemented inventions at the European Patent Office", 4ipCouncil, Fraunhofer ISI, 2015. The full study is downloadable **here**.

O1.
general considerations

Which IP rights can be relevant to IT developers?

The commercial outcomes of the software industry are distributed or sold as products (e.g. a specific software) or services, and since they are identified by a name (brand) in the market, **trade marks** are essential for the sector when reaching customers.

Designs concern the aesthetic characteristics of a product. They can protect the appearance of a hardware component, but can also protect the layout of an application or even its graphical interfaces.

01.
general considerations

Which IP rights can be relevant to IT developers?

Apart from these four most-commonly-used IP rights, there are also other forms of IP[4] that are relevant to the IT sector, namely:

- trade secrets (to protect confidential information),

- *sui generis* protection of databases (the content of the database itself is not protected by *sui generis* rights but might be protected through copyright),

- domain names (to protect the names of the Internet domains/addresses),

- integrated circuit topographies (to protect the layout/design of integrated circuits).

It is also important to underline that generally, a product/service, whether it is IT-related or not, can contain many of the different IP forms mentioned above.

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4. These forms of IP are not included within the contents of this guide.

One product can contain different IP titles (examples).

01.
general considerations

Where can I find further information about IP?

Here is a non-exhaustive list of sources where you can find more information on IP in general, as well as IT-related IP information:

- National IP Offices (WIPO database including copyright offices)

- National Patent Offices (EPO members)

- European Union Intellectual Property Office (EUIPO)

- European Patent Office (EPO)

- World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO)

- European IP Helpdesk

- Open Source Initiative

- Free Software Foundation (FSF)

- Creative Commons

01.
general considerations

Where can I find further information about IP?

IP rights require a certain expertise and can be quite complex. Any incorrect filing or negligence in the application process may result in your losing your rights irrevocably. Therefore, when making decisions about IP, it is strongly recommended that you consult with IP professionals. Further information is available from your national IP office.

02.

FAQs on PATENTS

What can be protected with patents?

Patents protect inventions belonging to any field of technology and that have a technical character. However, for an invention to be patented, it must meet the following three requirements:

1. the invention should be **novel** (not known in the state of the art)

2. it should contain an **inventive step** (non-obvious)

3. it must be susceptible of **industrial application.**

02.

FAQs on PATENTS

What cannot be protected with patents?

Inventions that do not meet these three conditions cannot be protected with a patent. Furthermore, the following types of inventions cannot be protected as a patent: discoveries; scientific theories; mathematical methods; aesthetic creations; schemes, rules and methods for performing mental acts, playing games or doing business; and presentations of information.

WARNING: This exclusion list also contains computer programs <u>as such</u>. But patents can indeed protect computer programs that have a technical character producing a technical effect. This specific area of patents is called "Computer-Implemented Inventions (CIIs)".

02.

FAQS on
PATENTS

What are "Computer-Implemented Inventions" and to what extent are they patentable?

As explained before, computer software cannot be patented as such. Therefore, in principle, the following processes (not an exhaustive list) are not deemed as "creating a technical effect through a technical solution" and thus <u>cannot</u> be patented in Europe:

- the normal physical effects of the execution of a program (e.g. circulation of electrical currents in a computer when running the program),

- treatment of data such as money, algorithm,

- presentation of information on a screen (e.g. the organisation of information on a screen),

- the storyline of games,

- programming language, and the source code itself.

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02.

FAQs on PATENTS

What are "Computer-Implemented Inventions" and to what extent are they patentable?

However, as explained by the European Patent Office, *"If a method has a technical character over and above the mere fact that it is computer-implemented, a corresponding computer program specifying that method produces a further technical effect when run on a computer."* [5] In this case, computer software may be patentable (e.g. a computer-implemented method for detecting malicious events occurring with respect to a blockchain data structure).

5. For more information about the "technical effect", see the EPO "Guidelines for Examination for computer programs" here.

02.

FAQs on PATENTS

What are "Computer-Implemented Inventions" and to what extent are they patentable?

Likewise, computer programs implementing security measures for protecting boot integrity or countermeasures against power analysis attacks also have a technical character since they rely on a technical understanding of the internal functioning of the computer.[6]

User interfaces (UIs) can also be patentable as long as their claims concern how and/or why the interface is configured in a particular way by focusing on the technical nature of its elements and their functionality (i.e. not the visual characteristics of the information that is presented – which is beyond the scope of patent protection but may be protected as a design). So, as can be seen from the above, there are quite a few possibilities for a computer program to be subject to a patent.

6. Examples are taken from the EPO "Guidelines for Examination for computer programs". For more information, please check here.

02.

FAQs on PATENTS

Where to file a patent?

Patents are territorial rights: this means that the protection of the invention is effective only in the countries/territories where the patent is granted and in force. Therefore, the first rule of thumb when filing a patent application is that you should file your patent application where you have (or are likely to have) a market. You should also consider filing your application in the markets where there is a risk of reproduction of your invention without your consent, where you intend to sell your product and/or where competitors are active or might emerge.

02.

FAQs on PATENTS

How to file a patent?

There are three main routes for filing a patent application:

- Individual Application (national route): Application to be filed with each national IP office.

- European Patent (European regional route): Application to be filed with the EPO (for a European Patent, protection in 38 European countries) or through a national IP office.

- International Patent Application (PCT application): Managed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), this procedure provides protection in more than 150 countries through a "bundle" of national patents.

Contact your national IP office, one of the Patent Information Centres (PATLIBs) or an IP professional for more information on patenting.

02.

CHECK OUT these EXAMPLES!
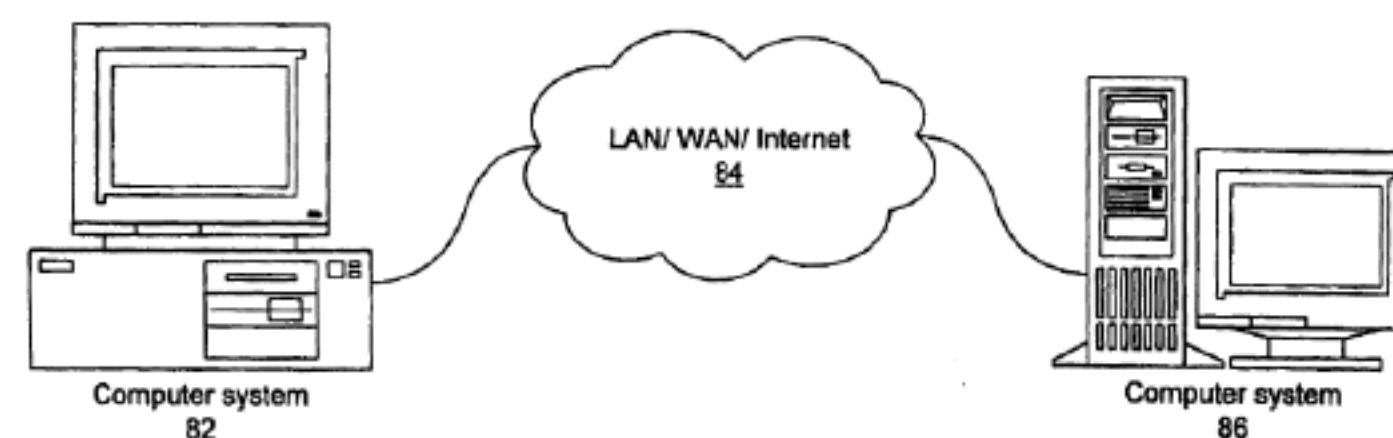
EP1216441B1 – Graphical programming system with distributed block diagram execution and user interface display.
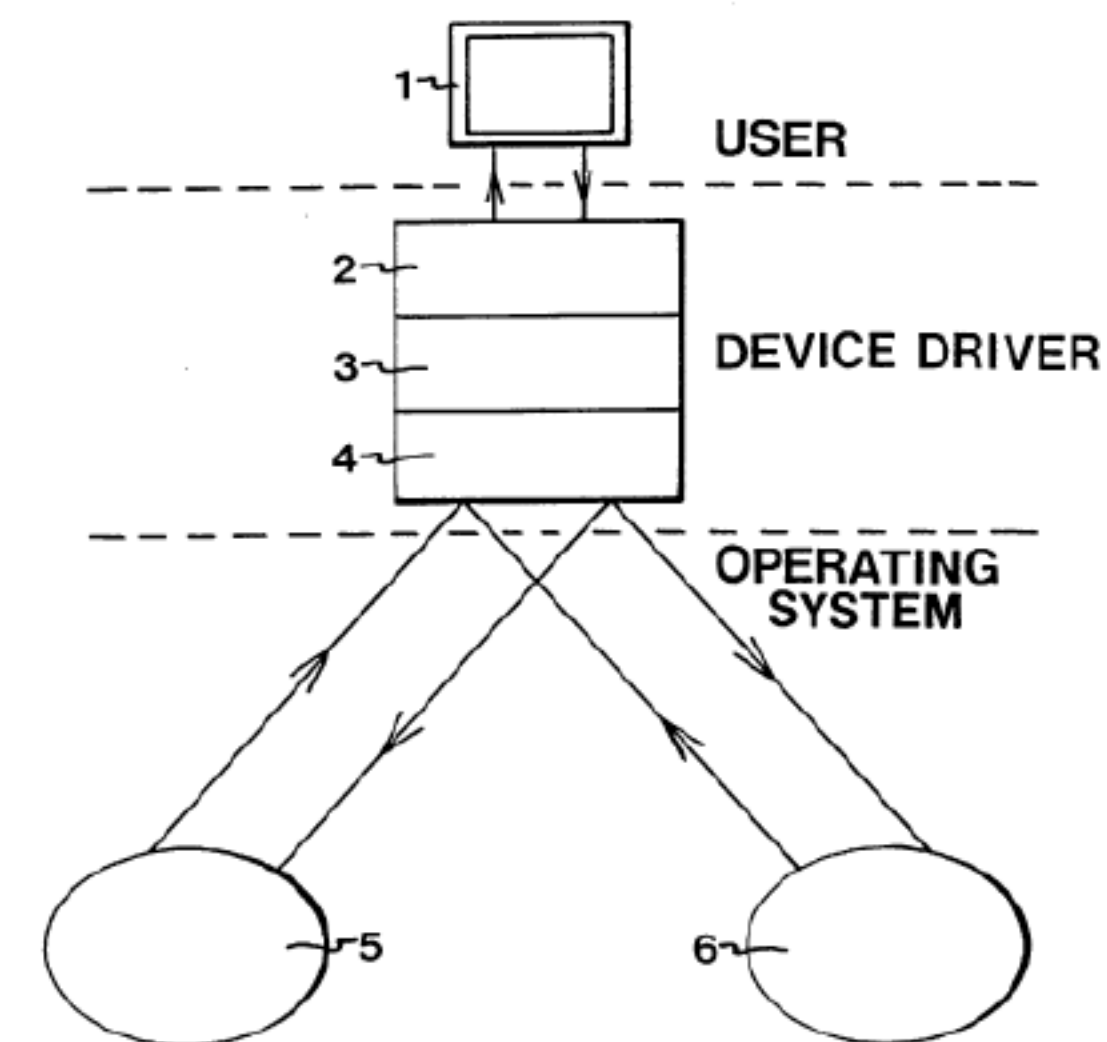
EP0630497B1 – Method and computer system for increasing the functionality of a computer program.

02.

CHECK OUT these EXAMPLES!

EP3226165B1 – Secure 3D model sharing using distributed ledger.
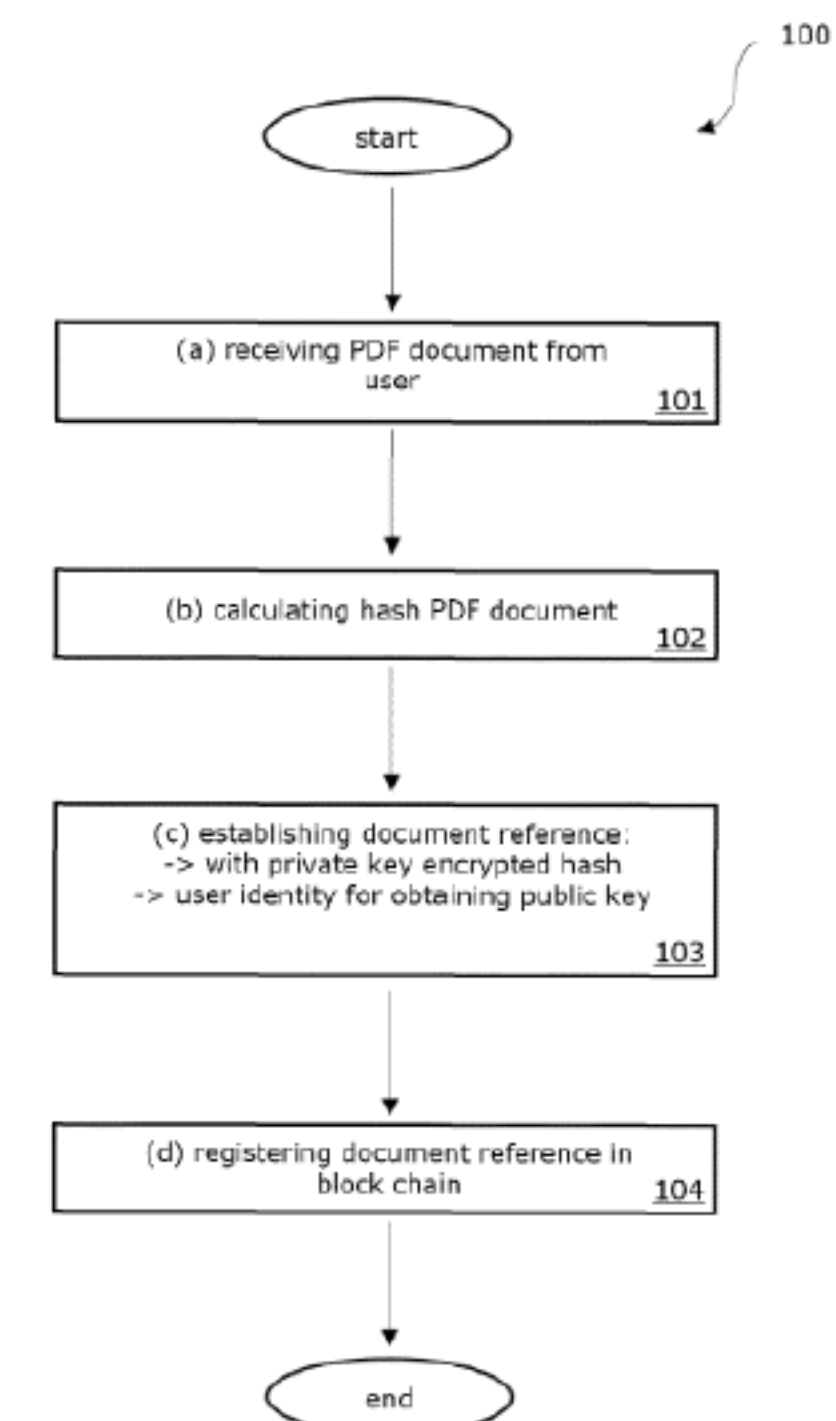
EP3560137B1 – Improved blockchain-based method for registration and verification of a file.

02.

PATENT BASICS at a GLANCE

Protects: Technical inventions

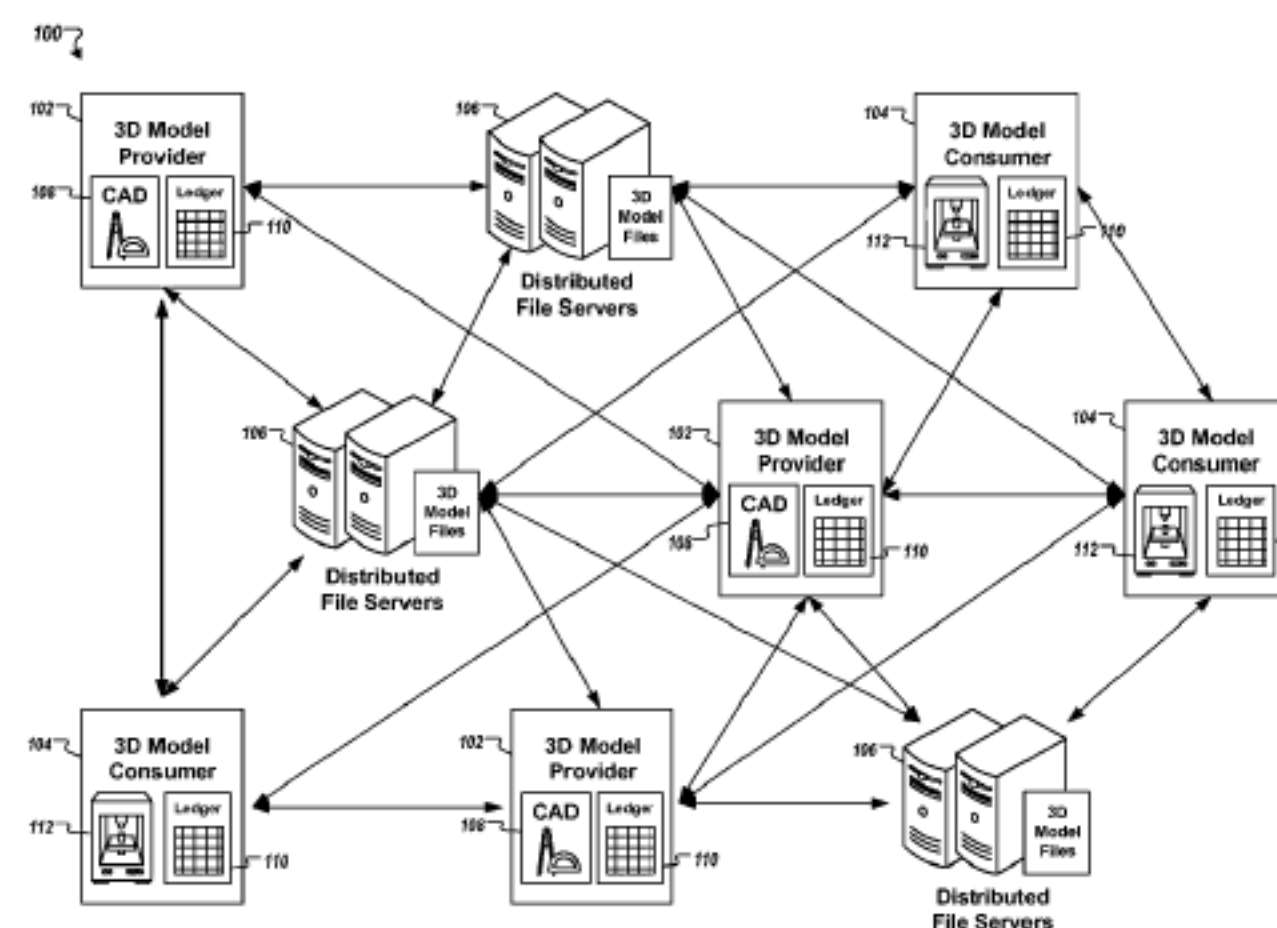**Patentability requirements:** Novelty, Inventive step, Industrial applicability

Duration: Maximum 20 years from the filing date (as long as the yearly maintenance fees are paid)

Main routes to file:

- National/Individual Applications (through the National IP Offices)

- European Patent (administered by the EPO)

- International (PCT) Application (administered by the WIPO)

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

What can be protected with a copyright?

Copyright is related to the rights of creators on their literary and artistic creations, such as books, music, paintings and sculptures, films or architectural works (only the artistic aspect, excluding the technical features). It protects the "original" works recorded in a material form (e.g. on paper, tape, film, as a software code, etc.). In other words, copyright does not protect "ideas" themselves, but it protects the "expression" of ideas.

As mentioned above, the main requirement for copyright protection is "originality", and this originality is related to the creativity expressed by the author in its work. It must be noted that the ideas in the work do not need to be original, but the form of expression (which copyright protects) must be an original creation by the author.[7]

7. "Understanding Copyright and Related Rights", WIPO, 2016. The full report is downloadable here.

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

Who is the owner of the copyrighted work?

Ownership is automatically granted to the author/creator of the work from the moment the work is created, without the need for any registration or procedure. If the work is executed under a mission assigned to an employee, as a work for hire, the employer is considered to be the legal owner of the work.

Ownership is an important issue as it is the owner of a copyright-protected work who can decide how to make use of the work, and can prevent others from using it without his/her permission.

03.
FAQs on COPYRIGHT

What can be (and cannot be) protected by copyright in IT-related developments?

Computer programs and other types of software, including mobile apps, are deemed to be literary works and protected under copyright law. More specifically, copyright can apply to the following types of IT developments:

- preparatory works (specifications expressed in terms of solution, functional analysis),

- software code (source and object code),

- graphic or data interfaces,

- elements such as sounds, texts, images that are part of a software,

- user manuals,

- name of the software, etc.

03.
FAQs on COPYRIGHT

What can be (and cannot be) protected by copyright in IT-related developments?

WARNING: Some aspects are not covered by copyright, for example:

- ideas and concepts (though technical functionalities and algorithms might be protected through a patent),

- specifications (as they do not fulfil the originality criteria),

- programming language.

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

What kind of rights are provided by copyright?

Two categories of rights are provided by copyright, namely (1) economic rights and (2) moral rights. These rights are explained below, using "software" as an example:

Economic/exploitation rights include:

- reproduction of all or parts of the software, using any means and under any form,

- loading, showing, executing, providing or stocking the software (if it requires reproduction),

- translation (including in a different programming language), adaptation, arrangement, or modification of the software in any way,

- marketing (including renting) the software.

Moral rights (that are, in general, perpetual and not transferable) may include:[8]

- paternity and attribution (right of identification) that gives the developer the right to choose whether to include his/her name in the software, or to publish it anonymously or under a pseudonym,

- preventing distorted productions of the software, thereby ensuring the integrity of the work (in case the modification harms the reputation of the creator),

- right of disclosure (i.e. to make available to the public), to control whether and in what way the software is deployed.

8. Moral rights still constitute one of the areas in which national laws show great divergence. Therefore, the scope of these rights must be further confirmed in national laws.

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

How to prove ownership of your software, enforce your copyright and not infringe on others' rights?

As copyright is a right that cannot be registered, proving the ownership has utmost importance. Even if copyright is provided automatically, it is always safer to prove the ownership of the copyright on developed works; and to be able to prove that you are the author/creator. Therefore, in order to avoid any problem with third parties, it is strongly advised to keep evidence, proof of work, etc. So, how can this be done?

Proving ownership is possible, for example, through a notary deposit, by sending registered postal letters to yourself, or in a more modern way, through virtual (digital) seals (e.g. i-Depot). Some national associations or organisations also offer specific tools to prove authorship for IT creations (e.g. Agency for Protection of Programs).[9]

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9. Please note that the eligibility/admissibility of these proofs by the national authorities/courts depends on national legislation.

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

How to prove ownership of your software, enforce your copyright and not infringe on others' rights?

For IT developers, **a good practice would be to deposit the software code and documentation through one of the above proof mechanisms,** especially when a core modification is made (new version, new functionalities, re-writing of the code). It can also be useful to include a copyright sign (©) and an SPDX file identifying the type of licence under which the software is distributed: this will make the public aware that you are protecting your rights.

An added value of using these proof mechanisms is that many of them also allow you to track your modifications, and then maintain the evidence.

03.
FAQs on COPYRIGHT

How to tackle different software licences?

There are a plethora of software licensing options, depending on the rights to be granted/obtained and the restrictions on the use of the software. These authorisations (i.e. licences) can either be free and open software licences (FOSS) or non-free licences.

However, in software licensing there is a specific point you should always bear in mind. You must be careful with the compatibilities between the licences of the different pieces of code used, and you should also check the dependencies between those pieces of software code (either with the developers themselves or using dedicated software solutions).

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

How to tackle different software licences?

Globally speaking, in order to avoid any trouble with third parties, the context of the developments undertaken must be carefully managed and documented (some measures to consider can be: ensuring the identification of all contributors, managing external relationships and subcontracting, etc.). In order to avoid infringing the IP rights of others, you must identify the owner of each element and obtain their authorisation to use the element. As mentioned above, along with relationship management, a good administration of compatibilities between the different types of licences of the software codes is key.

03.
FAQs on COPYRIGHT

**I am working in an open-source environment and I want to grant (or obtain) free open-source software (FOSS) licences.
So, why do I need to worry about IP if it is free and open?**

The reason why IP is important even in an open-source environment is that open source does not mean an *open bar*.
A common mistake is to think that "free and open-source" equals "free of IP rights". In fact, exactly the opposite is true!

FOSS actually relies on copyright law and is used to identify a specific group of IP licences where a number of different licence models are available, ranging from strictly permissive licenses to public domain licences. So FOSS actually means that there are IP rights, and whether you are developer or a user, you should study the FOSS licensing terms and act according to the boundaries stipulated in those terms. Because yes, there may still be boundaries even if it is a work in the public domain: remember the non-transferable "moral rights"!

Besides, it's important to stress again that the IP associated with FOSS may be managed according to different types of licences that might not be compatible between each other, with some parts being very restrictive in the range of permissions they authorise.[10]

10. You can check **Choose A License** and/or the **Open Source Initiative** web pages to see the different types of FOSS and their compatibilities.

03.

FAQs on COPYRIGHT

How to file a copyright?

Again, do not confuse registration of proof of ownership with copyright protection! Copyright protection is a right that cannot be registered. It is free of charge and is automatically provided once the work is created.

However, keeping or registering a proof of copyright ownership might necessitate a registration with a specific organisation and associated costs. Check this with your national IP office or authorities in charge of copyright (e.g. copyright offices).

03.

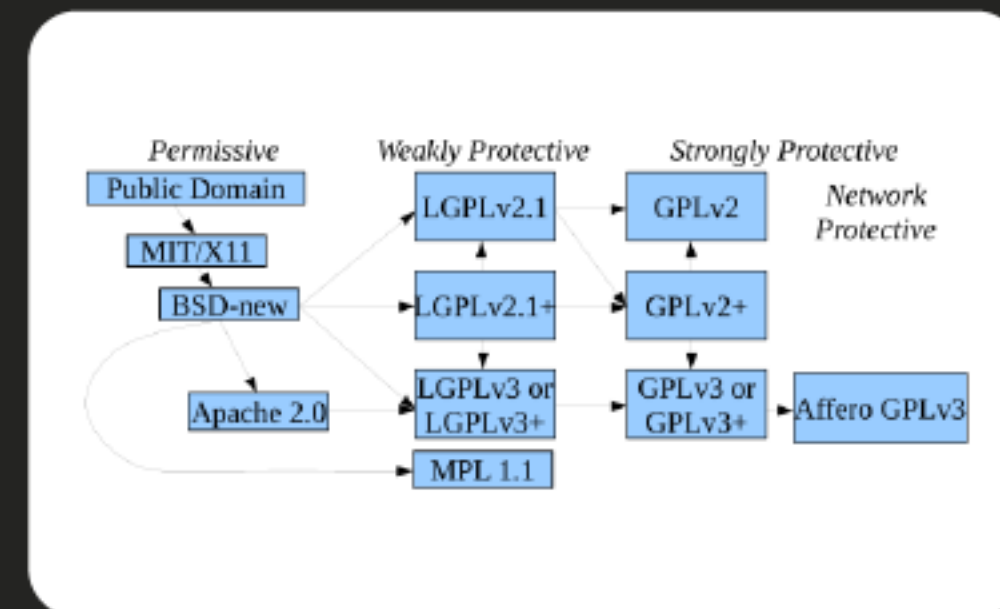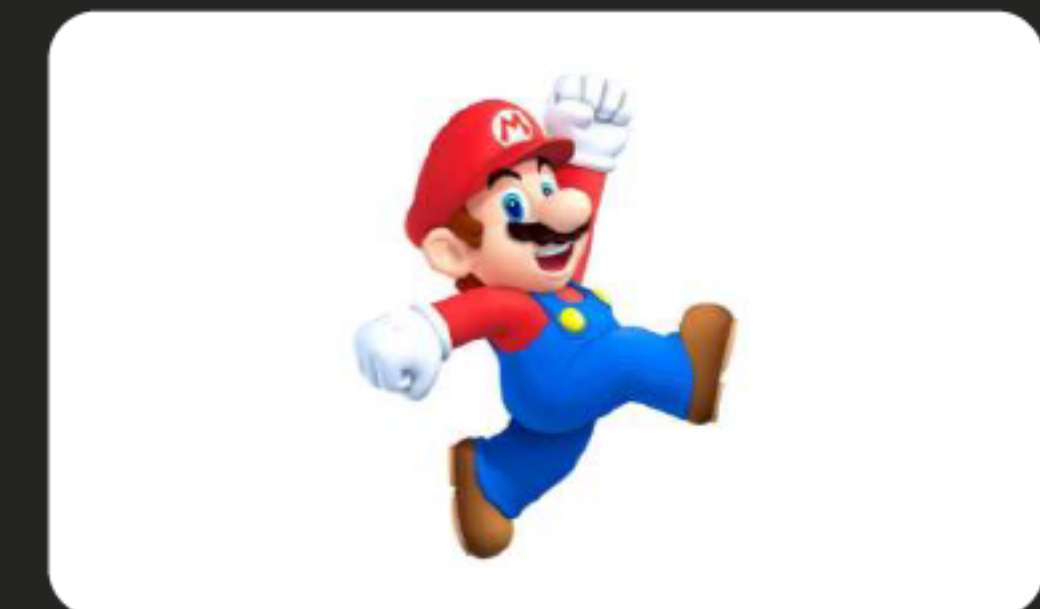## CHECK OUT these EXAMPLES!

Microsoft Windows 10 is a copyrighted product and licensed under the Microsoft Software License Terms.
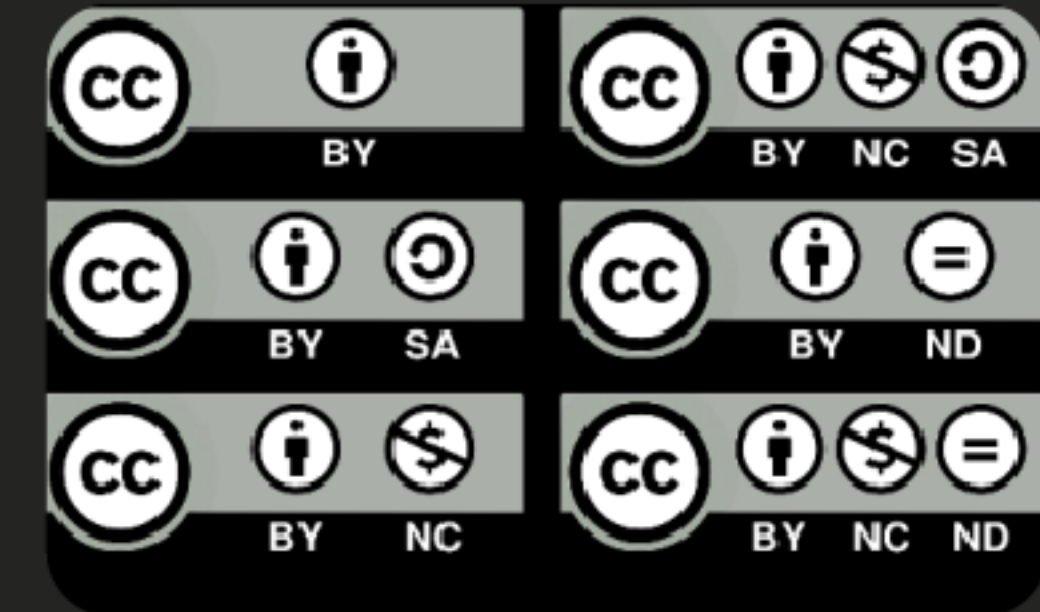
There are different creative commons licences available.

License compatibility between commonly used free OSS licenses.

Credits: David A. Wheeler (2007)

Super Mario Bros. was released in 1985, and has since been under copyright of Nintendo

03.
COPYRIGHT BASICS at a GLANCE

Protects: Literary, scientific and artistic works including computer software

Protection requirements: Originality

Duration: Economic rights are protected until 70 years after the death of the creator, or 70 years after the death of the last surviving creator in the case of joint creation. Moral rights are protected with no limitations.

Main routes to file:

- The right cannot be registered; protection automatically starts once the work is created.

- Different tools (e.g. virtual/electronic/digital seals) can be used to prove the ownership – their admissibility depends on national legislations.

04.
FAQs on
TRADE MARKS

What can be protected with trade marks?

Signs capable of distinguishing goods or services of one enterprise from those of other enterprises can be protected as a trade mark. These signs can be words, logos, letters, colours, the shape of goods or of the packaging of goods, slogans, sounds, etc., as long as they can be represented in any appropriate form.

Trade marks are filed and registered according to the goods and services categories (listed in the <u>Nice Classification</u>) on which the trade mark is used. The registration gives its owner the right to prevent third parties from using its trade mark in relation to these goods and services without his/her consent.

The trade mark to be applied for should not be identical or similar to any earlier trade mark for the same or related goods or services in the <u>same territory</u>: this latter point is important, since trade marks are also territorial rights and the rights are granted only within the territory of the registration.

04.

FAQs on TRADE MARKS

What is the difference between a company name and a trade mark?

Company names are not necessarily meant to distinguish the goods and services of a company, and they are registered in the trade registry when the company is created.

On the other hand, **trade marks are IP rights that your clients use to differentiate your goods and services** from the other goods and services on the market, and to identify them. However, one can also register a company name as a trade mark (e.g. "PowerPoint" is a trade mark of Microsoft Corp. while the company name "Microsoft" is also a registered trade mark).

How are trade marks relevant to IT?

04.
FAQs on
TRADE MARKS

Being the backbone of reaching consumers for all sectors, trade marks are very commonly used by the IT sector. Apart from its use as a product name (e.g. "SAP") or a service branding (e.g. "Zendesk"), a trade mark can be used to define a methodology (e.g. "Kanban") and/or for a programming language such as Java, Python, SQL, PHP, etc.

Concerning the previously-mentioned Nice Classification system, generally speaking, trade marks in relation to software products are registered under Class 9, and software/computer-related services are classified under Class 42. However, these classes should not be viewed as exhaustive, and the most relevant classes under which to request a trade mark must be assessed in light of your exact business area, and of the product and/or service that will bear the trade mark. Thus, it is always good to consult an IP professional before filing your trade mark application.

How are trade marks relevant to IT?

04.
FAQs on TRADE MARKS

Please note that trade marks will not protect the software program, itself, from recreation or imitation: it only protects the "brand" of your software product/service. Copyright (to protect the program itself) or patent (if your software creates a technical effect, the so-called "Computer-Implemented Invention") protection are the correct IP rights for such additional protections.

In addition to their classic use for distinguishing goods and services, trade marks can also be used as a "certification mark", which shows that products or services are in line with the quality standards dictated by the owner of the corresponding trade mark.[11] Certification marks are particularly useful in IT: for example, they allow you to control the provision of services under a certain quality level when associated with specifications, or they can, for instance, also be used for development methodologies (i.e. only the persons having followed a specific training are authorised to use the trade mark).

11. Please check here for more information on the EU Certification marks.

04.

FAQs on TRADE MARKS

Where to file a trade mark?

As for other IP rights, trade marks are also territorial rights, meaning that you can claim your trade mark rights only in the countries/territories where your trade mark is registered and in force. Therefore, **when filing a trade mark, it is important to file your application where you have (or are likely to have) a market**. You should also consider filing your application in the markets where there is a risk of infringement of your trade mark, where you intend to sell your product or service, and/or where competitors are active or might emerge.

04.

FAQs on
TRADE MARKS

How to file a trade mark?

There are three main routes for filing a trade mark application:

- Individual Application (national route): Application to be filed with each national IP office.

- European Union Trade Mark (EUTM): Application to be filed with the European Union IP Office (EUIPO) for protection in the 27 EU Member States.

- International Trade Mark Application (Madrid System): Managed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), this procedure allows you to obtain trade mark protection in more than 100 countries through a single application.

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04.

CHECK OUT these EXAMPLES!

The "Adobe logo" is a registered trade mark owned by Adobe Inc.

The "Bluetooth" word mark and its logo are registered trade marks of Bluetooth SIG, Inc.

The slogan of the Cisco Systems "Empowering the Internet Generation" is a registered trade mark.

The famous jingle of Intel is a registered sound mark. Click the logo to play.

04.

TRADE MARK BASICS at a GLANCE

Protects: Distinctive signs

Protection requirements: Able to be represented in any form. No prior identical/similar trade mark in the same/related classes in the same territory.

Duration: 10 years from the filing date, renewable without limitation, each time for 10 years.

Main routes to file:

- National/Individual Applications (through the national IP offices)

- European Union Trade Mark (administrated by the EUIPO)

- International Application/Madrid System (administrated by the WIPO)

05.

FAQs on DESIGNS

What can be protected with designs?

Designs protect aesthetic features of a product like its shape, patterns and colours. Only new designs possessing an individual character can enjoy such protection, and the protection does not cover the technical features – such features are subject to patent protection.

A design is considered to be new if no identical design has been disclosed (publicly displayed) before, and it can be considered original if the overall impression conveyed to the informed user differs from that conveyed by any other previous designs.

05.

FAQs on DESIGNS

What can be protected with designs?

Unlike patents, there is a one-year grace period during which applicants can file their design applications. During that period, their disclosure does not harm the novelty of the design.

Even though designs can be protected as a registered Community design (RCD), in the European Union, there is also an option for unregistered Community design (UCD), for which the protection period starts on the date the design is made available to the public (automatic protection, similar to copyright). The UCD is generally used for products having a short market life (e.g. in fashion) as it has a shorter protection period: three years in the UCD, versus maximum 25 years in the RCD.

05.

FAQs on DESIGNS

How are designs relevant to IT?

Because of their very nature, almost any industrial or handicraft item can be eligible for design protection, but not computer programs, as they are not physical products. However, this doesn't mean that designs are completely irrelevant to software developers. While computer programs, as such, cannot be protected as a design, some elements, such as user and graphic interfaces, screen displays, graphic symbols, etc. can benefit from design protection, in addition to the design of hardware products.

Where to file a design?

05.

FAQs on DESIGNS

Designs are also territorial rights, meaning that a design right can only be claimed in the countries/territories where the design is registered and in force. Therefore, the first rule of thumb still applies: **The design application must be filed in the countries where you have (or are likely to have) a market.** You should also consider filing your application in the markets where there is a risk of infringement of your design, where you intend to sell your product, and/or where competitors are active or might appear.

05.

FAQs on DESIGNS

How to file a design?

There are three main routes for filing a design application:

- Individual Application (national route): Application to be filed with each national IP office.

- Registered Community Design (RCD): Application to be filed with the European Union IP Office (EUIPO) for protection in the 27 EU Member States.

- International Design Application (Hague System): Managed by the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO), this procedure provides design protection in many countries through a single application.

05.

CHECK OUT these EXAMPLES!

Uber's user interface for driver rating is a registered design.

The graphic interface of games can be registered as a design, as Euro Games Technology Ltd. did here.

Facebook has registered this icon/emoji as a design.

Waldo's hat is a registered design owned by DreamWorks Distribution Ltd.

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05.

DESIGN BASICS at a GLANCE

Protects: Visual characteristics of a product

Patentability requirements: Novelty and originality (individual character)

Duration: **RCD:** 5 years from the filing date, renewable 4 times, each time for 5 years, together amounting to a maximum duration of 25 years. **UCD:** 3 years from the date of disclosure.

Main routes to file (RCD):

- National/Individual Applications (through the national IP offices)

- Registered Community Design (administrated by the EUIPO)

- International Application/Hague System (administrated by the WIPO)

Partners

info@tetraproject.eu