

Protecting your intellectual property (IP)

Protecting what you create, whether it's a name, logo, design, way of making something, flavour, scent, painting, model, utensil, machine – whatever it is that manifests your creativity, it's important. It's yours. But only if you protect it. So knowing how to protect it really matters.

The good news is that in some cases, like anything falling under copyright protection, you'll have automatic protection. So your writing, painting, musical creations don't need you to do anything else in theory. It is however always wise to use the © sign and put your name and the date of creation somewhere on such pieces, since proving that your work is original (not a copy of someone else – who may in fact have copied you at a later date) and that it belongs to you is so much easier.

But not all types of creativity have automatic protection. In fact, most don't.

We've set out below a bite-sized summary of each type of right that's available to protect your creativity, some examples of the type of creativity that they protect, what you have to do to guarantee you're protected by them and also how long that protection will last.

How we help

Need friendly advice right now? No problem.
We'll take care of it. Contact us on 0345 351 0025
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Trademark

Protects logos, brand names, slogans. Lasts: 10 years. Renewable every 10 years.

De Beers: "A Diamond is forever"

Coca Cola Bottle – shape

MasterCard: "There are some things money can't buy. For everything else, there's MasterCard".

McDonald's: "I'm Lovin' It" Nike: "Just do it"

L'Oreal: "Because You're Worth It"



Design rights

Protects appearance of a product including shapes (external), packaging and decoration. Lasts – Unregistered designs lasts for 10 years after first sold or 15 years after it was created. Registered designs must be renewed on its fifth anniversary and every 5 years thereafter up to a maximum of 25 years.

MontBlanc Pens

Dyson vacuum cleaners

Apple Ipad

G-Star's "ARC" range of jeans

Jimmy Choo's Ramona bag

Jaquar Land Rover motor vehicles



Copyright

Protects poems, books, film scripts, sound recordings, paintings, drawings and sketches. Duration:

- written, dramatic, musical and artistic copyright lasts 70 years after the death of the author
- copyright in a film is 70 years after the death of the last to survive of the director, the authors of the screenplay and composer of any music specially created for the film.
- sound and music recording, are protected for 70 years,
- published editions of written work are protected for 25 years.

JK Rowling – Harry Potter series

Roald Dahl – James and the Giant Peach

Tim Rice – Lion King (lyrics)

Andrew Lloyd Webber – Cats

John Lennon – 'There's nothing you can do that can't be done. Nothing you can sing that can't be sung.' (Line from All You Need is Love)



Patents

Protects inventions and products for example machines and tools. Lasts 20 years from the date of filing.

Monopoly – board game

Rolls-Royce – aviation

Lego – interconnected toy blocks

BT – communications

Unilever – foodstuffs

Gameboy by Nintendo – consoles