

Respecting Intellectual Property Rights

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The new school year always brings challenges and opportunities for our Ball State University students. One of the challenges that not only concerns students but can impact the University as well is the improper use of intellectual property [IP]. What is intellectual property?

Cornell University has this definition of IP: “Intellectual property refers to creations of the mind: inventions, literary and artistic works, and symbols, names, images, and designs used in commerce.” It follows then that intellectual property refers to music, lyrics, videos, and images including photographs.

As defined by the U.S. Copyright Law, IP has a bundle of legal rights for all things that people create. More often than not, these creations are called, works. These legal rights for works are defined in Section 106 of the Copyright Law.

The person who owns the copyright has the following five rights guaranteed by the Copyright Law that apply to their creation, their work:

1. The right to allow reproduction
2. The right to allow distribution
3. The right to allow public performance
4. The right to allow public display
5. The right to allow derivative works

The Copyright Law allows the owner of a work to say Yes or No to any of these 5 rights. Anyone wanting to reproduce a work, distribute it, perform or display it, or create a derivative work from the original needs permission from the owner of these five rights.



Peer-to-peer [P2P] file sharing services like BitTorrent, Azureus, BitComet, BitTornado, Limewire and Shareaza, while in and of themselves are not illegal, can be used to abuse intellectual property rights. These abuses are called infringements. By far, the most common types of infringements on all campuses throughout the United States are illegal downloading and sharing of audio and video files. This type of illegal file sharing infringes the first two of the owner’s rights of saying yes or no to reproduction and saying yes or no to the distribution of their work. There can be very serious consequences for infringing these rights.

The Ball State Community has a number of resources to assist students with the proper use of someone else’s intellectual property.

Student Rights and Community Standards, V. Code of Conduct, 5.2.3:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode/VCodeConduct.aspx>

Appendix E - Information Technology Users Policy:

<http://cms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/StudentRights/PoliciesandProcedures/StudentCode/APPENDIXE.aspx>

Copyright Infringement:

<http://sitecorecms.bsu.edu/About/AdministrativeOffices/SecurityServices/Report/CopyrightInfringement.aspx>

Copyright for Students Homepage:

<http://www.bsu.edu/library/collections/copyright/students/>

Copyright for Distance Educators Homepage:

<http://www.bsu.edu/library/collections/distanceed/faculty/>

Copyright and Intellectual Property Office Homepage:

<http://www.bsu.edu/library/collections/copyright/>

Respecting intellectual property ownership rights is a key for academic honesty, integrity, and academic achievement and is an integral part of the Ball State University experience.

For further information or to answer any questions, please contact:

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<http://www.bsu.edu/library/collections/copyright/>

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