

## YOU'VE CREATED IT—NOW WHAT?

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You have spent untold hours creating something, now what?

A complete answer is unfortunately beyond the scope of this column but first and foremost, register the copyright in your creative product. Copyright registration can be a relatively simple first step that has significant downstream consequences. For example, copyright registration impacts your ability to bring a lawsuit against someone who is infringing your copyright as well as the types of monetary relief available to you in such a lawsuit.

In keeping with the first step of registering your copyright, don't make assumptions about who owns the copyright in the creative product. Don't assume that you don't own the copyright simply because someone paid you to create something. And vice versa, don't assume that simply because you paid someone to create something that you own the copyright to it. These types of quick assumptions can come back to haunt you because determining copyright ownership in these situations can be tricky. Also, if you have oral agreements that you believe transferred ownership of the copyright in a creative product from or to you, think again. The Copyright Act takes a dim view of such oral agreements and instead generally requires some form of a writing to transfer copyright ownership.

The prospect of dealing with copyright law undoubtedly can be daunting but don't let this prevent you from taking important steps to protect your creative product. Arm yourself with information. One source of information is the U.S. Copyright Office's website at [www.copyright.gov](http://www.copyright.gov).