

## Copyright Compliance

Copyright is a set of protections afforded to the creator of an original work. In the United States, copyright arises from [Article I, §8](#) of the United States Constitution, which allows Congress "[t]o promote the Progress of Science and useful Arts, by securing for limited Times to Authors and Inventors the exclusive Right to their respective Writings and Discoveries." The specific laws governing copyright are found primarily in [17 U.S.C. §101ff.](#), as well as court rulings that interpret this legislation. In short, copyright law allows a person who holds the rights to created content (including text, music, images, video, or software) to control how that content may be used.

Copying or distributing any material (text, music, images, video, or software) in which you do not hold the copyright may constitute copyright infringement, which is a violation of federal law and Institute policy. "Copying or distributing" includes, *but may not be limited to*: photocopying; scanning (to print, to file, or to email); printing out; converting analog format to digital format; and file-sharing (copying, downloading, or uploading a digital file, whether through peer-to-peer platforms or by other means). Prohibited activities include using the Wentworth Institute of Technology network for sharing music, videos, or software without the copyright holder's permission.

Wentworth Institute of Technology expects all members of its community to comply with U.S. copyright laws, and refers all users of its technological and information resources to the [Responsible Use of Information Resources Policy](#) (<https://www.wit.edu/acceptable-use-policy>) and the description of copyright law included therein that governs the use of these resources.

Pursuant to Institute policy, Wentworth community members (including students) who violate copyright laws may be subject to disciplinary action, including but not limited to: loss of access to Institute computers, computer networks, data, and other technological and information resources; warning; suspension; and separation from the Institute.

Additionally, people who engage in copyright infringement may be liable for statutory damages of up to \$30,000 per work (i.e., each song, movie, etc.) infringed, even if the infringement was not willful, and, if it is determined that the infringement was willful, the amount may be increased to as much as \$150,000. Copyright infringers may also be liable for the attorney's fees of the copyright holder. In egregious cases, the infringer may also be subject to criminal penalties, including fines (of up to \$250,000) and imprisonment (of up to five years in federal prison).

In the case of a lawsuit, Wentworth Institute of Technology may be issued a subpoena to compel identification of individuals who have allegedly infringed copyright through file-sharing or other illegal activities; Wentworth is required to comply with lawfully-issued subpoenas.

There are legal alternatives to copyright infringement. Amazon, iTunes, and other online vendors have been authorized by rights holders to distribute copies of protected content lawfully, and you are encouraged to avail yourselves of these services.

Alternatively, you may seek permission from the copyright holder to use the protected content in your proposed manner. To learn more about seeking permissions from rights holders, please see [this information](#) from our Copyright and Fair Use guide.

If you have any questions about copyright compliance, please contact Kevin Kidd, Library Director 617-989-4095 or [kiddk@wit.edu](mailto:kiddk@wit.edu)