



## **GRADUATE SCHOOL OF ARTS & SCIENCES**

### **Electronic Thesis: Intellectual Property Issues**

#### **Copyright Basics**

Under U.S. law, each of us retains legal copyright of our own work once it is in tangible form. This means that if you are incorporating the material of others in your thesis, you should—with the exceptions noted below—request permission to do so. This may seem like a daunting task, but with a little guidance and some lead time, it shouldn't be.

#### **Fair Use and Public Domain**

Whether or not material you intend to use includes a copyright notice (©), you must assume that the owner retains copyright and make a “good faith effort” to obtain permission to use it. There are two exceptions to this general rule: (1) “fair use” and (2) use of works that are in the public domain:

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You should mail, fax, or e-mail a permission request to the publisher. A sample permission request is included here and can also be found in *The Chicago Manual of Style*. If you are unable to find the publisher on the Web, the addresses of book publishers can be found in *Literary Market Place* and the addresses of journals can be found in *Ulrich's International Periodicals Directory*, both of which are available in the Reference Department of Lauinger Library and most other libraries.

## **Documenting Permission**

If you have obtained permission, you should scan the permission letters (be sure to block out any signatures) and include them as an appendix to your thesis. Retain the original letters for your records.

## **Help**

The following websites can help you clarify permissions issues and offer guidance about when to seek permission for the use of copyrighted material:

Copyright Issues in Higher Education: A Guide for Faculty at Georgetown  
[www.georgetown.edu/policy/copyright/](http://www.georgetown.edu/policy/copyright/)

Copyright and Fair Use  
<http://fairuse.stanford.edu/>

The UT System Crash Course in Copyright  
[www.utsystem.edu/OGC/IntellectualProperty/cprtindx.htm](http://www.utsystem.edu/OGC/IntellectualProperty/cprtindx.htm)

Copyright Information and Education from the University of Minnesota  
<http://www.lib.umn.edu/copyright>

When Works Pass Into the Public Domain (note last updated 11/03)  
[www.unc.edu/~uncclng/public-d.htm](http://www.unc.edu/~uncclng/public-d.htm)

Copyright Clearance Center  
[www.copyright.com](http://www.copyright.com)

## **Publishing Your Thesis**

If you intend to seek publication of all or part of your thesis, you should not be unduly concerned about its electronic dissemination. The ETD Release Form that we require authorizes Georgetown University to release your electronic thesis worldwide. If it contains proprietary information that you want to protect while obtaining a patent, or for other valid reasons, you may request on the Electronic Thesis & Dissertation Release Form that the release of the thesis be suppressed for six months (further embargo may be granted upon special request). Most students find that the availability of their work on the Internet does not hinder publication, and in several cases has attracted publishers to them. Publisher policies can be searched in the Academic Journal Policy Database (<http://www.etsd.uc.edu/journal/>).



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