



**BEYOND THE BOOK – Christopher Kenneally talks with Traci Bission from Bission Barcelona on advice for authors about copyrighting and protecting their work.**

Welcome to a podcast of Beyond the Book, a presentation of the not-for-profit Copyright Clearance Center. Copyright Clearance Center is the world’s largest provider of copyright compliant solutions. Through a wide range of innovative licensing services and comprehensive educational programs for authors, publishers and their audiences in academia, business, and research institutions. For more information about Beyond the Book and Copyright Clearance Center, please go to [www Beyond the Book dot com](http://www.BeyondtheBook.com).

Q: Hi, this is Tracy Bission from Bission Barcelona, and I am here with Christopher Kenneally, Director of Author Relations at the Copyright Clearance Center in Massachusetts. Chris joins me today to offer advice to authors about copyrighting and protecting their work. Thanks for joining me, Chris.

A: Well thank you very much for inviting me, Tracy.

Q: Chris, I’m wondering what does copyrighting and protecting your work mean?

A: Well, copyrighting itself is a form of protection of ownership of your intellectual property that was allowed for in the constitution, actually – which is, I think, really a wonderful indication that the founding fathers thought enough of authors, and inventors as well, that they tried to protect them in our most important document. And indeed, it’s right there at the very beginning – “Congress shall have power to promote the progress of science and useful arts by securing for limited time to authors and inventors the exclusive right to their respective writings and discoveries.”

And really what that means is that the author, the creator, the inventor, has that exclusive right to license their work, to use their work, in whatever ways they see fit. As long as it’s original to them, of course. And this can be for any medium – not just in print, but for video, for drawings, for the stage, for dance, and so forth. And the point of protecting your work, of copyrighting it, is that it means that no one can use it without permission. It also means that if someone does use it without permission, then you can take them to court for infringement. And finally,

once you've recognized that you have ownership in the work, obviously you're going to put – or you're going to do your best to put it to work for you. And you recognize the value in it.

Law has changed. People may remember that it was a requirement for you to register your work with the US Copyright Office. That's no longer the case. As soon as you write the idea down, then it is copyrighted, automatically. Filing registration of copyright of an essay you have not published only protects you in this way, that if you were to find that infringed, and you took the person to court, you would be able to collect triple damages. Today it's simply a matter of fixing it into a computer file or a printout for you to have that copyright.

Q: It seems obvious that copyrighting your work is very important. Can you tell me why you feel a writer should care about this?

A: Well again, it's all because it's their livelihood. I mean if you are a plumber, you protect your tools – you make sure you don't leave them out at night for somebody to come along and take them. For a writer, whatever he or she creates is their property, it's their livelihood, it's their potential future livelihood. It even – if it's a very successful project, something that could be important to their family and their heirs down the road. And I think it's just a good idea for people to think about what they do as something that has value.

Again, it's a lot easier than it used to be, because you don't have to register, you do not go through an extended process. If you are an author who does wind up self-publishing, I would highly recommend that you do register that work. All publishers of any size will have as part of the contract the obligation to register the work once it's been published with the Library of Congress. If you publish yourself, and I know a lot of people do these days, I strongly recommend that they go to [Copyright.gov](http://Copyright.gov) and download the forms to fill out and send into the Library of Congress. I believe the fee is now \$45 per registration.

Q: So to start the process, visiting your Website is the best way to go?

A: Well I should clarify something. There are several websites that use the word copyright. There is [copyright.com](http://copyright.com), and that's [C-O-P-Y-R-I-G-H-T.com](http://C-O-P-Y-R-I-G-H-T.com) – that's Copyright Clearance Center. And Copyright Clearance Center is a not-for-profit, we've been around since the late 1970s, and what we are about is using copyrighted material in a variety of special ways. So if you are the author of a book that has a chapter a professor wishes to use in a course pack, we can license that work for you, and you'll be paid a royalty.

[Copyright.gov](http://Copyright.gov) is the US Copyright Office, and that's where you go to download those forms I was just speaking about, to be able to copyright the work – and you send that into Washington D.C. There is finally [copyright.org](http://copyright.org), and that's the Website of the Motion Picture Industry Association. And they were concerned,

going back to the early days of video recordings, about copyright, because they thought that they were going to lose a great deal of money. As it turns out, they've made a great deal of money on video recordings.

Q: No doubt. (laughter) Now, as the Director of Author Relations, can people contact you directly if they have questions?

A: Absolutely. I absolutely welcome questions, and I do hope they'll do a couple of different things. First of all, my e-mail address is Chris K – C-H-R-I-S-K – at Copyright.com. I suggest they do a couple of things if they want to learn more about the services that we have for authors. And because we are a not-for-profit, we feel it's our mission to promote the value of intellectual property. So it's not simply a matter of helping you to license the work, but to educate the owners of the work and the public about the proper use of this. So if you go to authors dot copyright dot com online – just those three words, authors dot copyright dot com, you'll get to the authors section of our Website, and there find a great many resources about what we do, what copyright is – so you're going to have some links there to the copyright office.

And within that site is a very special site we call Beyond the Book. Can also get there at BeyondtheBook.com. And Beyond the Book is our program for authors – and we call it a resource on the business of writing and publishing – and it's there that you'll find information, not only about copyright issues, but about all the things that kind of flow from whatever it is you create. So once you've written your book, you want to learn about how to market it better, how to make it findable online, to learn about whether you should be podcasting, to learn about what you could be doing in other ways to promote yourself – blogs and so forth. So there's a tremendous amount of resources there.

And then finally we have what we're doing right now. We have a podcast series that people can download. So absolutely they're welcome to send us questions. We get questions all the time, and it's funny, we get a lot of questions from young people – teenagers – who want to know if they can copyright the name of their band. That's the most important thing to a 14 year-old, I think.

Q: Absolutely. Well Chris, this is great information. I appreciate your tips and suggestions, they're very helpful. I appreciate your time. And for more information about the Copyright Clearance Center and their Beyond the Book program, please visit BeyondtheBookCast.com. For more information about Bission Barcelona, please visit our Website at BissionBarcelona.com. This is Tracy Bission saying thanks for listening in.

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today's dynamic publishing industry, from initial research to final publication and beyond.

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