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Copyright Protection Of Websites  
[Kristie Prinz](#)

**Q.**

How does copyright law work with respect to websites, and how do you register a copyright in a website?

-- *Cecelia*

**A.**

Original authorship on a website is protectable by copyright law, which includes text, artwork, photographs, audiovisual material, sound recordings, and other forms of authorship. Copyright protection exists from the time the work is fixed in tangible form. Registration is not necessary to protect the copyright in the work.

As in the case of other copyrighted materials, a website should include a notice of copyright ownership, which should be in the form of (i) the symbol (c)(the letter c in a circle) or in the alternative, the word "Copyright" or the abbreviation "Copr."; (ii) the year of first publication of the work; and (iii) the name of the owner of the copyright in the work.

To register a website with the U.S. Copyright Office, you should refer to Circular 66, which addresses online works and the appropriate forms to use for registering online works. Circular 66 can be accessed through the U.S. Copyright Office website at <http://www.copyright.gov> .

While it is true that anyone can register his or her work with the U.S. Copyright Office, my advice would be to consult with an intellectual property attorney in your jurisdiction, who is familiar with how to file copyright registrations, instead of trying to do it yourself. It is a little confusing to fill out the application appropriately, and by doing it yourself, you run the risk of omitting certain aspects of your site from the registration, which could prove to be a problem down the road, particularly if you are ever in the position of having to rely on the registration.

Also, you should remember that updates will not be included in any previous registration, so you should

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ideally file a new registration with each set of updates that you make to the site.

-- Kristie Prinz

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