# A History of Copyright

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## The origination of copyright

- The Statute of Anne, 1709, is regarded as the world's first copyright law. It was enacted in the UK, where the printing press had been in operation since the 15<sup>th</sup>Century and brought with it mass production of printed books.

- The new law gave a term of 14 years during which only the author and the printers to whom the authors chose to license their works could publish. For the first time the power was in the hands of the creators.

- The Berne Convention of 1886 was the first international agreement involving copyright. The original agreement included only 10 states but by formulating international agreements and creating new, minimum standards for dealing with copyright, the ability of 'Pirate Publishers' was diminished.

- Now the number of states signed up to the Berne Convention is 176; however these laws only determine base features of copyright laws. Copyright laws are, for the most part, siloed in individual states' sovereignty.

- Did you know? Some very famous figures have had a great contribution to the changes to copyright law over time and the rights of the author. Victor Hugo's campaigning was a driving force behind the creation of the Berne Convention and Charles Dickens' American tour in the mid 1800s, led him to lobby American congress to change their laws because of the proliferation of unauthorised copies of his books he discovered for which he received no income

## Changes to European copyright law, 9 July 2019

- The EU Copyright Directive came into force 7 June 2019. EU Member states then had two years to either implement the reforms within the framework of their existing laws, or to simply adopt the directive as law.

- The reforms particularly targetted the internet giants, such as Facebook, Google and YouTube, forcing them to take stricter measures to manage online content and prevent copyright breaches.

- In essence, platforms will be required to ensure the correct copyright agreements are in place for any third-party content shared. There are fears the broad nature of the reforms will negatively impact online content as content will just be taken down

or given restricted access meaning huge amounts of valuable information will be lost.

- Exceptions were agreed regarding Text and Data Mining (TDM) – the use of software to analyse huge volumes of text or data. This is a progressive exception that will help the development of technologies such as Artificial Intelligence.

- Educational institutions benefit from a cross boarder teaching exception, which permits the copying of material for teaching purposes in different countries. Previously only UK copyright law allowed this.

- As a result of Brexit and the UK leaving the EU, the UK is not obliged to implement the provisions in the Directive.

## References

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- Charles Dickens Info website accessed at: https://www.charlesdickensinfo.com/life/copyright-laws/

- Laws website accessed at: https://copyright.laws.com/international-copyright/berne/berne-convention-overview

## Helpful resources

- **Naomi Korn Associates resources** – A collection of free and openly licensed copyright, licensing and data protection help resources. www.naomikorn.com/resources

- **Intellectual Property Office (IPO)** – Intellectual property rights resources, information and updates on

UK legislation. www.gov.uk/government/organisations/intellectual-property-office

- **Heritage Digital guide: Working with volunteers: Copyright considerations** – A guide providing information on best copyright practices when it comes to managing or supervising volunteers. This resource includes an editable template Deed of Copyright Assignment that you can use with your own volunteers. www.charitydigital.org.uk/resources/digital-guide-working-with-volunteers-copyright-consideration

- **Heritage Digital guide: Heritage Organisations and Exceptions to Copyright** – A guide providing an essential overview of the various UK copyright exceptions that can be used by heritage organisations to support their digital strategies.www.charitydigital.org.uk/resources/resources/digital-guide-heritage-organisations-and-exceptions-to-copyright

- **Heritage Digital guide: A Guide to Copyright and Working with Suppliers to Create Digital Content** - Best practice steps and guidance to help heritage organisations manage copyright effectively when working with suppliers (for example freelancers, web developers, photographers or commissioned artists). www.charitydigital.org.uk/resources/resources/digital-guide-working-with-suppliers-to-create-digital-content

- **Heritage Digital guide: Brexit, Intellectual Property Rights and Heritage: What you Need to Know** - Information and guidance for heritage organisations about IP changes following the UK's departure from the EU. www.charitydigital.org.uk/resources/resources/digital-guide-brexit-intellectual-property-rights-and-heritage

- **Copyright User** - A website providing guidance and resources about using copyright resources www.copyrightuser.org

- **Creative Commons** – Details about the different types of CC licences and sources of CC licenced content. www.creativecommons.org

- **Publication: Information Law: Compliance for librarians, information professionals and knowledge managers, by Charles Oppenheim, Adrienne Muir and Naomi Korn** – A book presenting the tried and tested 'Compliance Methodology' for organisations seeking to navigate the complex legal landscape of the information professions. www.facetpublishing.co.uk/page/detail/?k=9781783303663*