



## Are separate copyrights needed for translated versions of your work?

CopyrightTips from experts\* at [CopyrightsNow.com](https://www.copyrightsnow.com)

Let's say your book is published in English and you want to publish translations in other languages to boost sales.

**Question:** Do you need a separate copyright registration for each translated version?

**Answer:** Yes. Each translation is considered a *derivative work* of the original book in a different language. It is also a *separate work* from the original and has its own copyright and therefore requires a *separate copyright registration*.

**Who owns the translated versions of the copyright?**

Since each translation is a derivative work, only the copyright owner of the original work can authorize translations.

Generally, the person or entity who creates the translation is the copyright owner of the 'translated text' in the specific language version, unless the translation is authorized by a 'Work-for-Hire' Agreement, in which case the contracting entity owns all rights (including copyright) to the translation. This is because under a 'Work-for-Hire' Agreement, the contracting party is considered the Author, and the translator's name doesn't have to be revealed in the work.

However, even if a copyright owner authorizes another entity to translate their work, the *copyright owner retains the copyright to the original work* and the exclusive rights to make or authorize other derivative works such as other translations.

**In any case, if a copyrighted work is used without the permission of the copyright owner, copyright protection will not extend to any part of the new work in which such material has been used unlawfully, and the unauthorized translation may constitute copyright infringement.**

## Sample copyright registration for Translated Works

To register copyrights in translated works, certain information is needed about any previous registrations of the original work and a description of the new material added and pre-existing material used.

### Example: Register translated version of existing book to Chinese

Your original book is published in English by Your Self-Publishing Company - which also owns the copyright. You hire an independent contractor under a 'Work-for-Hire' to translate text into Chinese.

Here are sample copyright registration entries from CopyrightsNow®:

BOW58B-F4      Network Solutions (Chinese Edition)      Cpy Y      15%...  
Lck N

### Create/Edit - Copyright Project

Has your work been previously registered with the Copyright Office?

Prev Reg?     Yes     No    *Has there been a previous copyright registration filed for this work?*    ?

Previous Registration No.    TX(XX)0099912345

Year of Prev Registration    2023

*Fig 1: Sample screenshot of Project - Previously registered screen*

If the original English version was registered by the same owner (i.e., Claimant) as the translated version, you would reference the previous registration.

**CopyrightsNow**® CopyrightsLock | Log-off |   **Next >**

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 Loc N

### Author Information

Individual    Organization

*Enter your full legal name (not a 'Pen' name) - leave blank if 'Organization' is selected*

First Name       Last

Company\*

*\* Leave Company blank (no spaces in the field) if 'Individual' is selected*

Address

City       St       Zip

Country       Yr of Birth

(Optional)

Phone

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E-Mail

Check to use Author's contact information as the only Copyright Owner (Claimant) and Certificate mailing address

*Fig 2: Sample screenshot of Author Information*

In this sample, the Author and Claimant is your company (Your Self-Publishing Company) since you hired a translator under a 'Work-for-Hire' agreement.

Therefore, *your company owns all rights to the translation* and is listed as the Author and Claimant on the copyright registration with an Author Contribution shown as 'translation'.

Note: If the translation is **not covered** by a 'Work-for-Hire' agreement and/or the Translator is not affiliated with the original copyright owner then the Author and Claimant of the new work would be the Translator.

**(Note: All translations required permission from the original copyright owner)**

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## Author Information *(Literary Work)*

First Name      Last Name      OR Company  
            Your Self-Publishing Company

**Author Contribution** ?
 Text  
 Artwork  
 Photographs  
 Computer Program  
 Other...

*Check all categories of your creative contribution to the work*

If 'Other' checked above enter description  
 What's this?

*Limited to 99 characters*  
 On a later screen 'Limitation for Pre-Existing Material' - you can enter 'Add'l Notes'

Fig 3: Sample screenshot of Author Contribution for 'Translation (Chinese)'

Author Contribution is shown as 'Translation (Chinese)'.

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## Author Information

First Name      Last Name      OR Company  
            Your Self-Publishing Company

*If a 'work-for-hire' agreement applies to this work from an employee or subcontractor, check 'Yes'*

Work-for-Hire?\*  Yes  No ?
*\* If you are registering Author as an 'Organization' you must select 'Work-for-Hire'*

*If you would like to remain anonymous, check 'Yes' (default No)*

Anonymous       Yes  No ?

*If you would like to use a 'Pen name' (pseudonym), check 'Yes' and enter name here (default No)*

Pseudonym       Yes  No      Pen Name  ?

*If there is a co-author for this work, check 'Yes' (default No)*

Co-Author?       Yes  No ?

Fig 4: Sample screenshot showing 'Work-for-Hire' selection

In this example, your company (Your Self-Publishing Company) hired a translator under a 'Work-for-Hire' agreement; therefore, you check 'Yes' for 'Work-for-Hire'

Under a 'Work-for-Hire' agreement, *you* as the contracting party would own all the rights to the work - *even though you did not create it*. The agreement should be in writing and should clearly state it is a 'Work-for-Hire' contract with all rights being owned by you - as the commissioning entity.

The screenshot shows the CopyrightsNow website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a home icon, the CopyrightsNow logo, a 'Log-off' button, a help icon, a back icon, and a 'Next >' button. Below the navigation bar, the page title is 'BOW58B-F4 Network Solutions (Chinese Edition)'. The main heading is 'Limitation for Pre-Existing Material'. The form contains the following sections:

- Pre-existing material?** with radio buttons for 'Yes' (selected) and 'No'. A note says: 'Check 'Yes' if you used any material which you did not create yourself including stock art, other licensed material and public domain/fair use material.' There is a help icon to the right.
- Description** with a prompt: 'List 'Type' of material (i.e., Text, Art, Audio, etc.) Not a list of all 3rd party material!'. The input field contains: 'Text (English), Photos, Illustrations'. A note to the left says: 'Describe type of pre-existing 3rd party material you used.'
- Add'l Notes** with a prompt: 'Indicate other notes regarding content used / created'. The input field contains: 'Author Created: Translation (Chinese); Other elements are Pre-Existing Material from the original English version'.

Fig 5: Sample screenshot showing 'Limitation for Pre-Existing Material'

### Limitation for Pre-Existing Material: 'Yes'

*Required since the new work contains material previously published or previously registered in the U. S. Copyright Office*

### Description of Material Used (and excluded from this registration):

English Text, Photographs, Illustrations

### Add'l Notes (Indicate New Material):

Author Created Translation (Chinese); Other elements are Pre-Existing material from original English version

To complete the registration, click 'Submit' on the last screen:



Fig 6: Sample screenshot of 'Submit' button

Sound confusing? *Rest Easy...* By using a copyright preparation tool like CopyrightsNow®... the system edits and validates your application with AI algorithms... and each application is reviewed by a Specialist to minimize potential issues which may cause delays or rejection by the USCO.

CopyrightsNow® also provides **On-line HELP** for each screen with detailed data element descriptions and 'Use-Case' procedures.

For more information on copyright registration and 'Work-for-Hire', see: [https://www.digi-rights.com/drights/blogs/Blog\\_04a\\_Work-for-Hire.pdf](https://www.digi-rights.com/drights/blogs/Blog_04a_Work-for-Hire.pdf)

To start your copyright registration protection, click to [learn more!](#)

*For more information on Derivative Works, refer to U. S. Copyright Office - Circular 14 - Copyright in Derivative Works and Compilations*

*\* The information contained in this post and software application are believed to be accurate at the time of publication; however, copyright regulations change and subject to various interpretations... so always consult with a personal attorney for legal advice.*

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