



How to copyright a compilation of Articles, Artwork or other collections!

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

Let's say you want to publish a compilation of articles written by separate authors and include some articles that you authored. Can you copyright the entire work with one copyright registration?

Answer: **Yes.** However, the copyright for a compilation *as a whole* is separate from copyrights for each article of content.

So, when you create a compilation, your copyright protects only the work as a whole (i.e., your selection and arrangement of elements) not the individual elements itself. Each article should be copyrighted by the respective author as a separate copyright registration.

However, if you created some of the elements (i.e., text, artwork, illustrations, etc.) as part of the compilation - then you can include those elements you created as part of the copyright registration.

You would place a copyright notice on the work, such as:

© 2024 Your Name. All Rights Reserved.

What is a compilation?

Compilations of data or pre-existing works (also known as 'collective works') may be copyrightable if the materials are selected, coordinated, or arranged in such a way that the resulting work as a whole constitutes a **new work**.

When the collection is a purely mechanical task with no element of original selection, coordination, or arrangement, such as a white-pages telephone directory, then copyright protection for the compilation is not available.

Some examples of compilations that may be copyrightable are:

Examples:

- A directory of *the best services* in a geographic region
- A list of the *best short stories* of the year
- A collection of sound recordings of the *top hits* of the year
- A book of *greatest news photos*
- A website containing text, photos, and graphics

- An academic journal containing articles on a *particular topic*
- A book comprised of *articles by different authors or journalists*

In the above examples, Compilation Authorship may be involved in deciding which were the best stories, the biggest hits, greatest photos, the appropriate articles for selection, and in what order to present the works within the compilation.

Note: The author(s) and title(s) of the pre-existing works included in the compilation do not need to be entered on a copyright registration form. However the type of content in the pre-existing works must be listed in 'Limitations for Pre-existing material' on the copyright registration.

However, you still need permission from the respective author of each work included in the compilation.

What elements does your copyright protect?

- 1) Compilation Authorship - protects the new work as a whole for the selection and arrangement of elements within the work, including: articles, photos and other pre-existing material
- 2) Original Authorship - protects newly created elements such as: articles, text, photos, art, illustrations, etc. that you created for the compilation

(Note: Both types of authorship may be included on one copyright registration)

Who owns the compilation?

So now that you've created a compilation, who owns it... and why does it matter? If you're an **in-house editor or author**, *your employer owns the compilation copyright for each project - and the registration should be filed under the company name.*

However, if you're an **independent contractor or an outside agency**, you will start out owning the compilation copyright (*and any elements you created for it*), unless you have signed a 'work-for-hire' agreement with contractor - which typically reverts all 'rights' to the contractor.

Sample copyright registration for a Compilation Work

Here is a sample of screen entries from CopyrightsNow®:

The screenshot shows the 'Author Information' section of the CopyrightsNow® 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 user ID 'BOWIOD-B2' and the title 'My Compilation of Works' are displayed. The form is for an organization, as indicated by the selected radio button. The fields are as follows:

Author Information	<input type="radio"/> Individual <input checked="" type="radio"/> Organization		
First Name	[Redacted]	Last	[Redacted]
Company*	My Publishing Company		
Address	123 Main St		
City	Your City	St	MI - Michigan
Zip	48000		
Country	United States	Yr of Birth	[Redacted]
Phone	248-111-9999		
E-Mail	mycompilation@domain.com		

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

Fig 1: Sample screenshot of Author Information

In this sample, an organization publishes the work and is therefore considered the Author. If you copyright as an 'Individual', enter [Your Name](#) and leave Company (blank).

As an employee of company (*even if it is your own company*) it is considered a 'work-for-hire' where the company owns all rights to your authorship.

However, the company *does not own rights* to other articles contributed by other authors. There are two important guidelines:

1. Other pre-existing article titles do not need to appear on the copyright registration;
2. Other Author(s) are **not listed** on the copyright registration - only the creative elements of the articles need to be entered in 'Limitations for Pre-Existing Material' (such as: text, photos, art, illustrations, etc.)

The copyright claimant should also be the Company (or Individual), as the owner of the work.

Please note that copyright issues can be complex in your situation. [Consult a copyright attorney for specific legal advice.](#)

BOWIOD-B2 My Compilation of Works Cn N Lck Y

Author Information (Literary Work)

First Name Last Name OR Company

Author Contribution Text
 Artwork
 Photographs
 Computer Program
 Other...

If 'Other' checked above enter description
Limited to 99 characters
[What's this?](#)
 On a later screen 'Limitation for Pre-Existing Material' - you can enter 'Add'l Notes'

Fig 2: Sample screenshot of Author Contribution for the work

Enter the elements of your copyright:

- 1) Your Authorship of the article(s) - i.e., [Text](#), [Artwork](#), etc. AND
- 2) [Compilation Authorship - selection and arrangement of articles](#)

BOWIOD-B2 My Compilation of Works Cpy N Lck Y

Author Information

First Name Last Name OR 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 3: Sample screenshot showing 'Work-for-Hire' selection

Check 'Yes' for Work-for-Hire (since the Author is a Company)

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Limitation for Pre-Existing Material

If your work includes any 'Pre-existing 3rd Party Material', **you cannot claim copyright on that material** even if you have permission and/or a license. Check 'Yes' and list type of material below:

Pre-existing material? Yes No *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.*

Description *List 'Type' of material (i.e., Text, Art, Audio, etc.) Not a list of all 3rd party material!*

Describe type of pre-existing 3rd party material you used.

Text, Illustrations, Logos

Add'l Notes *Indicate other notes regarding content used / created*

Selection and arrangement of articles

Fig 4: Sample screenshot showing 'Limitation for Pre-Existing Material' selection

Check 'Yes' for Pre-existing material (since non-Authored articles are included) and list the 'Type' of material such as: Text, Illustrations, Logos, etc. (*not the actual name of the articles or content*)

Note: The name of each article is not required, nor is the name of the authors. However, you must have permissions from each author to publish.

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

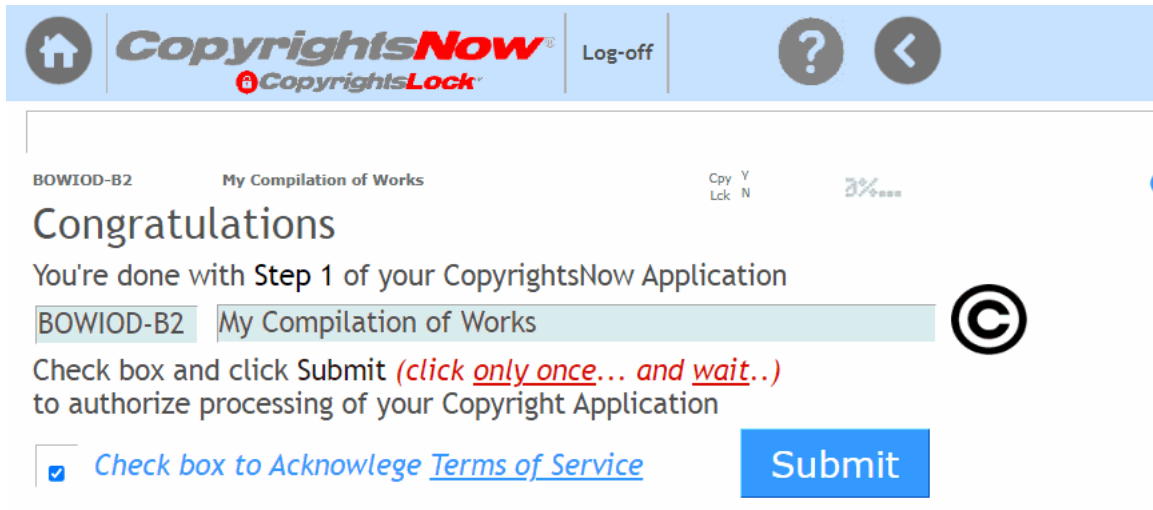


Fig 5: Sample screenshot of 'Submit' button

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 personally 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.

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

This blog is intended as an overview of copyrights. The authoritative source for U.S. copyright law is the Copyright Act, codified in Title 17 of the United States Code. Copyright regulations are codified in Title 37 of the Code of Federal Regulations. Copyright Office practices and procedures are summarized in the third edition of the Compendium of U.S. Copyright Office Practices, cited as the Compendium.

*For more information on Compilations, refer to:
U. S. Copyright Office - Circular 14 - Copyright in Derivative Works and Compilations
<https://www.copyright.gov/circs/circ14.pdf>*

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