

Intellectual Property Issues with 3D Printing

Intellectual Property and 3D printing don't get talked about often, mainly because 3D printing is still growing into a mainstream activity. But with 3D printing starting to become more accessible to businesses and homes, what kind of Intellectual Property issues might develop that your business will need to protect or analyze?

Protecting Original 3D Creations

Any blueprint of a 3D design can be protected through copyright. And if your business is a creative one where people are creating original 3D files, this is going to be a necessary step as an interesting direction in creating new media works. However, many existing blueprints already exist for specific 3D objects. If your business happens to print one of those designs that you didn't create yourself, you could face copyright infringement if you plan to profit off the objects.

Just as you would with any other creative work of art, you have to check if it's available in the public domain before you can make money off of it. When using an existing blueprint for a 3D object, check online to see if it's copyrighted and who the creator was. You can contact them for permission once you confirm their existence.

Unknowingly Copying a 3D Printed Object

In the world of copyrights, it's not considered infringement if you unknowingly copied someone's 3D design and deemed it an original work. This can happen often in a large creative world where someone else may come up with a nearly identical idea to yours.

It's quite different in the world of patents and trademarks. Any use of a patented or trademarked 3D object you unknowingly create can still result in infringement charges. That's why your business will have to conduct careful examinations on 3D printing in the future and make sure designs you create aren't already patented or trademarked. This procedure may become common in the next few years as 3D printing becomes ubiquitous in businesses.

Changing Colors or Patterns of a 3D Object

Since you may be new to Intellectual Property rights, you might think changing an existing 3D object with a different pattern or color can avoid infringements. The truth is, if the object is still in its original shape, it's still going to make the copyright, patent, or trademark applicable. Sometimes you'll be able to locate a registered trademark symbol on one part of a design that indicates the specific part of the design is protected and shouldn't be copied.

Printing Copies of Works That Were in Public Domain

This could be one of the most complicated Intellectual Property issues to emerge from 3D printing. It comes down to printing duplicates of existing works of art long considered to be in the public domain. Sometimes buying a replica of those works will have an embedded trademark that can still infringe despite the actual work of art being public domain. It's why when you print

a scanned object, it's going to have to be inspected very carefully to see what markings might be on there that are translated into the 3D copy.

Even though 3D printing is new territory, we can help you through all of it and more at [Traklight](#). We'll help you identify the Intellectual Property you have and help you secure it for your own financial gain and safety. [Contact us](#) and we'll introduce you to our IP vault where you can store all of your original 3D blueprints you don't want stolen.



Mary Juetten, Founder and CEO of [Traklight.com](#), developed the idea for Traklight while earning her JD and has leveraged 25+ years of business experience to globally launch Traklight in less than three years. Traklight is an innovative software company with a mission to help educate and empower you to be proactive in identifying, protecting, and leveraging your ideas for your startup, invention, or business. Through the use of online IP identification tools and resources, Traklight users can protect their IP, and prevent infringement disputes and subsequent losses of large sums of money. Follow Traklight on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), or their [blog](#).

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